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ABSTRACT

The introduction to this report describes the functions and activities of the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) which collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates statistical information on crime, victims of crime, criminal offenders, and operations of justice systems at all levels of government; provides financial and technical support to state statistical and operating agencies; and analyzes national information policy on such issues as the privacy, confidentiality, and security of criminal justice data and the interstate exchange of criminal records. This report was created to supply summary information on the most current data available from all the BJS statistical series. A section on crime looks at crime trends, incidence, violent crime, victims, weapons, and the offender-victim relationship. Another section examines characteristics of robbery, domestic violence against women, rape, household burglary, bank robbery, and automated teller machine loss and theft. Another section looks at drugs and crime, sentences and time served by drug offenders, drug offender profiles, drug use in the general population, and public opinion about drugs. A section on corrections examines state prisons, adult correctional populations, juveniles, international incarceration rates, prison crowding, characteristics of inmates, funding, time served in prison, and capital punishment. Other sections focus on the cost of crime; the public response to crime; adjudication and sentencing; recidivism and career criminals; and privacy, confidentiality, and security of criminal justice data. (NB)

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BJS Data Report, 1987

BJS reports on . . .

Crime 5

Characteristics of various types of crime 16

Drugs and crime 20

The cost of crime 27

The public response to crime 30

Adjudication and sentencing 37

Corrections 52

Recidivism and career criminals 68

Privacy, security, and confidentiality of criminal justice data 73

Source notes 79

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U.S. Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Statistics

Steven R. Schlesinger
Director

Single copies of any report cited here or any other BJS publication can be ordered from the Justice Statistics Clearinghouse, National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850, toll-free 800-732-3277 (local number 301-251-5500). Please order using NCJ numbers listed in sources, page 79. Postage and handling are charged for bulk orders.

Public-use tapes of BJS data sets and other criminal justice data are available from the Criminal Justice Data Archive, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, Mi 48106 (313-763-5010).

The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

NCJ-110643
April 1988

Contents

Introduction 1

BJS reports on . . . 5

Crime 5

Crime trends 8

The volume of crime 9

Violent crime 10

Victims of crime 10

The relationship between victim and offender 12

The use of weapons in crime 13

The location of crime 14

Crime against District of Columbia residents and Capitol Hill employees 15

Characteristics of various types of crime 16

Robbery 16

Domestic violence against women 17

Rape 17

Household burglary 18

Bank robbery 18

Automated teller machine loss and theft 19

Drugs 20

Drugs and crime 22

Original sentence and time served by drug offenders 23

Drug offender profiles 24

Drug use in the general population 24

Public opinion about drugs 25

The cost of crime 27

Economic cost of crime to victims 28

Cost of the justice system 29

The public response to crime 30

Preventing crime 31

Reporting crime 32

Fear of crime 33

Public confidence in the criminal justice system 34

Public opinion on crime and punishment 35

Adjudication and sentencing 37

Civil and criminal cases filed and disposed 39

Felony courts 40

Local prosecution 41

Felony case-processing time 43

Federal prosecution and pretrial release 44

Indigent defense 45

Appeals and habeas corpus 46

Sentencing practices 47

Sentencing outcomes 49

Prosecution of white-collar offenders 51

Corrections 52

State prisons 54

Adult correctional populations 56

Juveniles in custody 58

International incarceration rates 59

Prison and jail crowding 60

Characteristics of prison and jail inmates 61

Corrections funding 63

Time served in prison 64

Capital punishment 66

Recidivism and career criminals 68

Young parolees 70

Federal probationers and parolees 71

Criminal histories of prison and jail inmates 72

Privacy, security, and confidentiality of criminal justice data 73

Criminal justice "hot" files 74

Quality of criminal history data 75

Automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS) 77

Source Notes 79

Introduction

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)—
- collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates statistical information on crime, victims of crime, criminal offenders, and operations of justice systems at all levels of government
- provides financial and technical support to State statistical and operating agencies
- analyzes national information policy on such issues as the privacy, confidentiality, and security of criminal justice data and the interstate exchange of criminal records.

In the 8 years since its creation BJS has developed a program that responds to the diverse requirements of the 1979 Justice System Improvement Act and the 1984 Justice Assistance Act. These acts addressed more than half a century of recommendations calling for an independent and objective national center to provide basic information on crime to the President, the Congress, the judiciary, State and local governments, the general public, and the media.

In meeting its statutory mandate BJS has developed more than two dozen data collection series using a variety of methods that include household interviews, censuses and sample surveys of criminal justice agencies and of prisoners and inmates, and compilations of administrative records.

BJS collects little raw data; rather, it designs collection programs and enters into agreements to collect data with other Federal agencies (such as the U.S. Bureau of the Census), private associations, and research organizations.

Initial data analysis is reserved to BJS staff. This analysis is performed by the BJS staff of statisticians, criminologists, and social science analysts. BJS maintains this internal analytic capability to provide the Administration, the Congress, the judiciary, and the public with timely and accurate data concerning problems of crime and the administration of justice in the Nation.

BJS prepared and disseminated 40 reports and data releases during fiscal 1987, a 16% increase over 1986.

BJS Bulletins, begun in 1981, present data gleaned from its various statistical series. In a nontechnical format each BJS Bulletin presents the latest information on particular aspects of crime or the administration of justice from the Bureau's ongoing statistical series.

BJS Special Reports, begun in 1983, also are written in nontechnical language and aimed at a broad audience. Each Special Report focuses on a specific topic in criminal justice.

Each BJS Bulletin and BJS Special Report is announced in a press release which summarizes the findings to ensure wide dissemination to policymakers and the public. Sometimes to expedite public communication, press releases alone are used to announce new BJS findings. During fiscal 1987 this method was used in April for the first release of 1986 victimization data and in September for the release of midyear prisoner counts.

BJS press releases and reports have received extensive coverage in the electronic and print media and have been cited frequently in the editorial columns of the Nation's newspapers.

BJS also prepares and releases detailed tabulations from its data series. These reports, often running over 100 pages, contain extensive cross tabulations of the variables covered in the BJS data collection series. Persons for whom it is impractical to work with the data tapes can access the full detail of BJS data in these reports. These reports also explain data collection methodology, define terms, and include copies of any questionnaires used.

BJS Technical Reports address issues of statistical methodology and special topics in a more detailed and technical format than in a BJS Bulletin or BJS Special Report.

Each year BJS publishes its *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*, which presents data from nearly 100 different sources in a single easy-to-use reference volume.

In fiscal 1987 progress was made on the second edition of *Report to the Nation on crime and justice;* publication is anticipated during 1988. The first edition was a major effort of BJS during fiscal 1983 and 1984. It was a landmark document in that it was the first attempt to describe comprehensively crime and the justice system in a nontechnical format. The first edition is now in its second printing, with nearly 75,000 copies sold or distributed.

The first edition of *Report to the Nation* was awarded a first-place prize in the 1984 Blue Pencil Competition of the National Association of Government Communicators in the category of general publications of over 16 pages. It also received an Award of Excellence in the 1984–85 Technical Communications Contest conducted by the Washington, D.C., Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.

To supply summary information similar to what is contained in *Report to the Nation* in years when it is not issued, *BJS data report, 1986* was prepared and printed during fiscal 1987 and *Crime and justice facts, 1985* was prepared and printed in fiscal 1986. These documents present the most current data available from all the BJS statistical series.

BJS also disseminates statistical information by other methods, responding to thousands of requests for data, both in writing and by telephone. The requests come from Federal, State, and local officials; the media; researchers; students; teachers; and the general public. The pamphlet *How to gain access to BJS data* describes the programs of the Bureau and the availability of data from the various BJS series. Each year the Bureau also publishes *Telephone contacts*, which lists a wide range of topics in criminal justice and the names and telephone numbers of BJS staff members most familiar with each topic.

To assist persons seeking crime and criminal justice data, BJS supports a staff member who specializes in statistical resources at the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS). The BJS representative at NCJRS can be reached through a toll-free telephone number, 800–732–3277 (persons in Maryland and the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area should dial 301–251–5500).

BJS distributes its reports through the NCJRS, which notifies those on its mailing list of forthcoming publications. Users then request copies of desired publications. Eacl. year between 5,000 and 25,000 copies of each BJS report published are distributed in response to requests. To register for the NCJRS mailing list or order a BJS report, write to NCJRS, P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850, or call 800–732–3277 (persons in Maryland and the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area should dial 301–251–5500).

Planning a specialized Data Center & Clearinghouse for Drugs & Crime was a major project during fiscal 1987. BJS saw the need for easier access to existing data on drug law enforcement and the justice system's treatment of drug offenders and nondrug offenders who are drug users. Persons in need of such information have had to contact numerous persons throughout Federal, State, and local governments. The Data Center & Clearinghouse will—

- provide easy access to existing data through a toll-free number (800–666–3332)
- evaluate the statistical sufficiency and adequacy of the data for policymaking
- develop analyses that will help explain in lay language the nature of drug enforcement in this country
- develop a comprehensive report on drugs modeled on the BJS *Report to the Nation on crime and justice.*

The Data Center & Clearinghouse is described in more detail in the "New initiatives" section of this report.

BJS sponsors the National Criminal Justice Data Archive at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan. The archive assists users whose needs are not satisfied by published statistics. All BJS data tapes (covering most of the BJS data series) and other high-quality data are stored at the archive and disseminated via magnetic tapes compatible with the user's computing facility. The archive can be reached by writing the National Criminal Justice Data Archive, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, 313–763–5010.

With BJS funding, a catalog and library of statistical reports produced by the State criminal justice statistical analysis centers are maintained by the Criminal Justice Statistics Association, 444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 606, Washington, DC 20001, 202–624–8560.

BJS also supports the National Clearinghouse for Criminal Justice Information Systems, 925 Secret River Drive, Suite H, Sacramento, CA 95831, 916–392–2550. The clearinghouse—

- operates an automated index of more than 1,000 criminal justice information systems maintained by State and local governments throughout the Nation
- issues technical publications
- provides technical assistance and training for State and local government officials
- prepares the *Directory of automated criminal justice information systems*
- operates the computerized Criminal Justice Information Bulletin Board
- operates the National Criminal Justice Computer Laboratory and Training Center.

BJS reports on . . .

Crime

The amount and nature of crime have become prime indicators by which Americans judge how well public officials are performing their jobs. These public officials, as well as criminologists and researchers, also monitor the crime rate to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at crime reduction. Because of the importance attached to changes in the crime rate, the Nation must have sound and accurate statistics that measure the amount and characteristics of crime over time.

The largest BJS statistical series is the National Crime Survey (NCS). This survey—

- provides the Nation's only systematic measurement of crime rates and the characteristics of crime and crime victims based on national household surveys
- measures the amount of rape, robbery, assault, personal larceny, household burglary and larceny, and motor vehicle theft experienced by a representative sample of the U.S. population
- provides detailed data about the characteristics of victims, the victim-offender relationship, and the criminal incident, including the extent of loss or injury and whether the offense was reported to the police
- conducts interviews at 6-month intervals in about 49,000 U.S. households, asking 101,000 persons who are at least 12 years old what crimes they experienced since the last interview
- provides a vehicle for periodic supplements to collect important data that are too costly to collect or are not needed annually.

In April BJS released preliminary victimization rates for 1986 that basically were unchanged from 1985, when they reached the lowest level in the 14-year history of the NCS. This report was released on the accelerated schedule, adopted in fiscal 1985, that has reduced the time between the reference year and the release date by 5 months. This earlier release results from methodological work aimed at rapid publication of the data.

In October final results basically confirmed the preliminary estimates. For example, the final rate for crimes of violence was 28.1 per 1,000 persons compared with the preliminary rate of 28.0.

In fiscal 1987 BJS released, for the seventh year, an NCS indicator that measures the proportion of American households touched by crime, *Households touched by crime, 1986* (BJS Bulletin, June 1987) This indicator has revealed that victimization by crime is one of the most common negative life events that a family can suffer; 25% of U.S. households were touched by crime in 1986. For the first time the households-touched-by-crime indicator produced regional data. Households in the Northeastern United States were the least vulnerable to crime, whereas households in the West were affected the most.

During the year BJS continued to implement the National Crime Survey redesign. In July 1986 interviewers began using a new questionnaire, revised to include many improvements in incident reporting. The new questionnaire contains several questions designed to elicit victims' experiences with the criminal justice system after their victimization.

Preliminary data from the revised questionnaire have been received and are being analyzed for a report to be published in mid-1988.

Two small pretests of a new screening questionnaire were conducted, and national pretests are scheduled for February and August of 1988. This questionnaire should better screen for—and therefore yield—greater numbers of difficult-to-measure crimes such as rape and family violence.

Major changes to the NCS will be introduced in fiscal 1989. (The NCS redesign and other projects to improve the quality of statistical information on crime are discussed in the "New initiatives" section of this report.)

Also during the year the initial county-level data file of victimization data was completed and transmitted to the National Criminal Justice Data Archive at the University of Michigan as a public use data tape. To protect confidentiality, sampling data on these public use files has been scrambled to prevent a match with particular respondents. These files contain key NCS variables and important economic and demographic data for the appropriate geographic unit. Adding Uniform Crime Reports data to the files is being explored. Release of these files will allow—

- BJS to respond swiftly to requests for data on particular subnational units
- users more analytic flexibility in investigating victimization patterns for the areas of interest
- analysis of NCS data with other data available for counties on topics that are expected to yield geographic variations.

Topical NCS reports released during fiscal 1987 included—

- *Teenage victims* (a National Crime Survey Report, November 1986)
- *Robbery victims* (BJS Special Report, April 1987)
- *Lifetime likelihood of victimization* (BJS Technical Report, March 1987)
- *Violent crime by strangers and non-strangers* (BJS Special Report, January 1987)
- *Series crimes: Report of a field test* (BJS Technical Report, April 1987).

These reports frequently combine data over a period of many years to provide enough sample cases for more indepth analyses than would be possible with a single year's data.

Eight reports on criminal victimization were produced in fiscal 1987, including—

- final 1985 NCS estimates in *Criminal victimization, 1985* (BJS Bulletin, October 1986)
- *Criminal victimization in the United States, 1985* (BJS Final Report, May 1987)
- *Households touched by crime, 1986* (BJS Bulletin, June 1987).

Topical crime studies for fiscal 1988 include—

- trends in violent crime
- elderly victims
- motor vehicle theft
- victims' experiences with the justice system
- injuries in criminal victimization
- international crime rates
- crime and seasonality
- NCS redesign overview.

Crime trends

In 1986 criminal victimizations reached the lowest level in the 14-year history of the National Crime Survey (NCS). The 34.1 million criminal victimizations recorded in 1986 were about 18% below the 41.5 million recorded in the peak year of 1981.

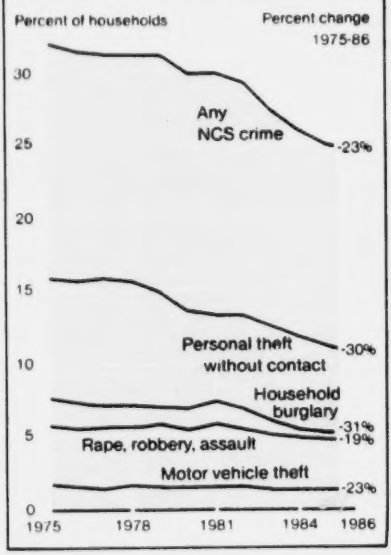
Since 1981 the victimization rate per 1,000 persons for—

- violent crimes fell 20%
- personal thefts fell 21%.

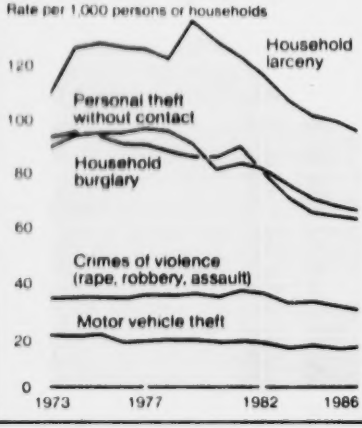
Between 1981 and 1986 victimization rates for—

- robberies fell 31%
- assaults fell 17%
- household burglaries fell 30%
- household larcenies fell 23%
- motor vehicle thefts fell 12%.

Households touched by selected crimes of violence and theft, 1975-86



Trends in victimization rates for selected crimes, 1973-86



In 1986 crime touched 25% of U.S. households, not measurably different from 1985, when the rate fell to its lowest level in a decade. These households suffered a robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, rape, assault, or theft.

The percent touched by crime varied by region—

- 19% in the Northeast
- 30% in the West
- 25% in the Midwest and South.

Households most likely to be touched by crime—

- were black, 27%
- had incomes of $25,000 or more, 28%
- were in urban areas, 29%.

Overall, trends in crime rates against teenagers since 1973 have been similar to those for adults. Teenagers have experienced a decline in thefts, but violent crimes against them have remained essentially unchanged.

Sources: *Criminal victimization, 1986. Households touched by crime, 1986. Teenage victims.*

The volume of crime

In 1986 the National Crime Survey reported 34.1 million victimizations:

	Number of victimizations	Victimizations per 1,000 population*
Personal crimes		
—of violence	5,515,000	28.1
Rape	130,000	0.7
Robbery	1,009,000	5.1
Assault	4,376,000	22.3
Aggravated	1,543,000	7.9
Simple	2,833,000	14.4
—of theft	13,235,000	67.5

		Victimizations per 1,000 households
Household crimes		
Burglary	5,557,000	61.5
Larceny	8,455,000	93.5
Motor vehicle theft	1,356,000	15.0

*Victimizations per 1,000 population are for those age 12 or older.

In 1986 crime touched 22.2 million households—25% of all households.

	Number of households	Percent
Personal crimes		
—of violence	4,225,000	4.7%
Rape	121,000	0.1
Robbery	843,000	0.9
Assault	3,464,000	3.8
Aggravated	1,253,000	1.4
Simple	2,408,000	2.7
—of theft	10,098,000	11.2
Household crimes		
Burglary	4,778,000	5.3
Larceny	7,238,000	8.0
Motor vehicle theft	1,216,000	1.4

Sources: *Criminal victimization, 1986. Households touched by crime, 1986.*

Violent crime

In 1986 about 5% of all households had a member who was a victim of a violent crime.

Violent crime rates are—
- highest against black males
- higher against blacks than whites or members of other minority groups
- higher against unemployed persons—whether male, female, white, or black—than employed persons in their respective groups
- about 70% higher against males than females
- lowest against white females.

Rates for crimes of violence and theft are highest for young persons 12 to 24 years old.

The lifetime chances of being murdered are much higher for blacks than for whites: Black males have a 1 in 30 chance to be murdered; white males have a 1 in 178 chance.

Each year about 1 in 12 persons are victims of a violent crime. The risk of violent crime other than homicide is particularly high among males 16 to 24 years old and is about the same for whites and blacks in this age group.

Sources: *Criminal victimization, 1986*. *The risk of violent crime*.

Victims of crime

1985 victimizations per 1,000 persons or households

	Personal crimes		Household crimes
	Violence	Theft	
Sex			
Male	39	75	
Female	22	65	
Age			
12–15	54	108	455
16–19	67	122	
20–24	60	108	241
25–34	37	83	
35–49	20	63	195
50–64	10	40	137
65 and over	5	19	78
Race			
White	29	70	169
Black	38	63	226
Other	25	73	150
Origin			
Hispanic	30	61	236
Non-Hispanic	30	70	171
Income			
Less than $7,500	52	68	195
$7,500–9,999	34	63	177
$10,000–14,999	32	65	183
$15,000–24,999	28	68	176
$25,000–29,999	29	69	162
$30,000–49,999	22	76	173
$50,000 or more	25	90	181
Residence*			
Central city	43	85	238
1,000,000 or more	45	80	217
500,000–999,999	45	92	239
250,000–499,999	37	88	256
50,000–249,999	44	81	246
Suburban	30	77	169
Rural	22	54	136

*1984 data.

Rates for crimes of theft in 1985 were lower against Hispanics than non-Hispanics, 61 vs. 70 per 1,000, but were the same for violent crimes.

Teenage victimization rates for violent crime and theft were about twice as high as those of the adult population age 20 and older. Younger teens (12 to 15 years old) had lower violent crime rates than older teens (16 to 19 years old), yet both groups had similar theft rates.

About 80% of the 12-year-olds in the United States will become victims of completed or attempted violent crimes during their lifetimes if current crime rates continue unchanged. About half of them will be such victims two or more times.

An estimated 3 in 10 of these young people will be the victims of a completed or attempted robbery during their lifetimes—about half of the blacks and 1 in 4 of the whites.

The chance of being an assault victim is much greater than of being a robbery victim. The likelihood of being a robbery victim also is much greater than of being a rape victim.

Victimization rates for all three NCS household crimes (burglary, household larceny, and motor vehicle theft) were higher against members of households headed by blacks than against members of households headed by whites or members of other minority groups combined.

Based on the number of vehicles owned, motor vehicle theft rates were higher against heads of black households than against whites or members of other minority groups.

Household victimization rates increased as the size of the household increased: Persons living in households with six or more persons experienced a higher total victimization rate than individuals in smaller households.

Sources: *Criminal victimization in the United States, 1985. Teenage victims. Lifetime likelihood of victimization.*

The relationship between victim and offender

Most violent crimes are committed by persons who are strangers to their victims. From 1982–84 strangers committed—

- 57% of all crimes of violence, including 11% in which the offender was known by sight only
- three-fourths of robberies, including 6% in which the offender was known by sight only
- more than half of assaults and rapes, including those in which the offender was known by sight only.

Most violent crimes by strangers (70%) were committed against males; most crimes by relatives (77%) were committed against females.

Violent crime has intra- as well as interracial aspects. In 1985—

- 79% of violent crimes against whites were committed by whites
- 84% of violent crimes against blacks were committed by blacks
- 98% of violent crimes by whites were against whites
- 53% of violent crimes by blacks were against whites.

Teenagers were more likely to be victimized by someone they knew than were adults—about a fifth of the violent crimes against teenagers were committed by someone well known to them and an additional fifth by a casual acquaintance.

Sources: *Violent crime by strangers and nonstrangers. Criminal victimization in the United States, 1985. Teenage victims.*

The use of weapons in crime

Armed offenders were responsible for 24 million victimizations from 1973–82, accounting for 37% of all violent victimizations.

Half of all robberies, a third of all assaults, and a fourth of all rapes or attempted rapes were committed by armed criminals.

Guns were involved in 13% of the violent crimes, knives in 11%, other weapons in 13%, and unknown types of weapons in 2%.

The offender fired a gun in about 25% of the violent crimes that involved only firearms. Assailants armed only with knives cut or attempted to cut about 22% of their victims. Victims were shot in 4% of all violent victimizations; they were cut or stabbed in 10%.

A greater proportion of offenses were completed by armed than by unarmed offenders:

	Completed	Attempted
Rape		
By armed offender	49%	51%
By unarmed offender	28	72
Robbery		
By armed offender	79	21
By unarmed offender	57	43

Victims of unarmed offenders were injured 30% of the time. Victims of offenders armed—

- with guns were less likely to be injured than those of offenders armed with other weapons
- only with guns were injured 14% of the time
- only with knives were injured 25% of the time
- only with other weapons (such as sticks, rocks, or bottles) were injured 45% of the time.

Victims injured by offenders with guns or knives were more likely than those injured by offenders with other weapons or those injured by unarmed offenders to require medical attention or hospital treatment.

Among victims who reported hospital stays of one night or longer, the average stay was—

- 16.3 days for those injured by guns
- 7.2 days for those injured by knives
- 8.2 days for those injured by other weapons
- 6.6 days for those injured by unarmed offenders.

Offenders armed with guns or other weapons were more likely than those armed only with knives or unarmed offenders to victimize more than one person in the same incident.

Robbers brandished weapons in almost half of the robberies from 1973–82; 41% of these weapons were guns.

Source: *The use of weapons in committing crimes.*

The location of crime

City residents were about twice as likely as rural residents to be victims of violent crime during 1983.

1983 victimizations per 1,000 population

	Crimes	
Place of residence	Violence	Theft
All areas	31.0	76.9
Central cities	43.3	92.0
Suburban areas	29.4	82.0
Rural areas	22.4	57.7

Most crimes against city, suburban, and rural residents occurred in the general areas where the victims lived. Yet suburban dwellers were more likely to be victims of violent crimes within the city limits of the central cities of their metropolitan areas (12%) than were city dwellers to become victims in the suburban areas surrounding their cities (5%).

Almost 95% of the violent crimes against people who live in cities with 1 million or more inhabitants occurred in the city itself, whereas about 66% of the violent crimes against residents of suburbs of such cities occurred in the suburbs of the same city.

Robbery and personal larceny with contact (purse snatching and pocket picking) were especially likely to occur in cities:

- City residents who were victims of these crimes were almost always victimized in their own areas (94% and 95%, respectively).
- Many suburban victims of these crimes were victimized in city settings (31% and 35%, respectively).
- People living in small towns and rural areas reported that a higher proportion of these crimes occurred in metropolitan areas than was so for other personal crimes.

Source: *Locating city, suburban, and rural crime.*

Crime against District of Columbia residents and Capitol Hill employees

Victimization rates of residents of the District of Columbia (D.C.) and of its Maryland and Virginia suburbs were compared: D.C. residents were more likely than suburban residents to be robbed but were less likely to be victims of vandalism.

The study found the following crime victim rates per 1,000 population:

	D.C. residents	Suburban residents
Robbery	29	12
Personal vandalism	12	30
Household vandalism	18	35

With one exception victimization rates did not differ significantly between Capitol Hill employees and other employed people in the D.C. area. The single exception was larceny without contact, where Capitol Hill employees had a higher overall rate.

The following rates were found:

	Capitol Hill employees	Other employed people
Violent crime		
Robbery	14	18
Assault	32	36
Threat	23	23
Property crime		
Larceny with contact	58	62
Larceny without contact	135	106
Personal vandalism	39	31

Source: *Criminal victimization of District of Columbia residents and Capitol Hill employees: Summary.*

20

Characteristics of various types of crime

Information on the characteristics of completed and attempted criminal events can help the public deter crime. For example, many burglaries can be avoided by simply keeping doors locked.

BJS periodically publishes reports from the National Crime Survey on the characteristics of specific types of crimes. For example, an April 1987 BJS Special Report examined robbery victimization. In earlier years, crimes such as rape, burglary, and domestic violence against women were the topics of Special Reports. Motor vehicle theft is one topic scheduled for analysis during fiscal 1988.

Other data describing crime characteristics are collected under the Federal Justice Statistics Program. During fiscal 1987 work continued on the first annual compendium of Federal justice statistics, describing characteristics of both criminal and civil offenses. The compendium will be released in fiscal 1988 and continued on an annual basis after that. In previous years studies were completed on electronic fund transfer systems fraud, bank robbery, and automated teller machine theft.

Robbery

Almost 14.7 million people were robbed or were victims of attempted robbery during the dozen years from 1973 through 1984, an average of about 1.2 million a year.

Two-thirds of these victims lost money or property during the robbery, a third were injured, and almost a fourth were both injured and lost property. About 1 in 12 robbery victims experienced serious injuries, such as a rape, a knife or gunshot wound, broken bones, or being knocked unconscious.

The robbers were male in almost 90% of the offenses and black in about half. There was more than one robber in about 50% of the cases.

Robbery often occurs in conjunction with other crimes. During the 1973–84 period robbery victims also suffered—

- a rape in about 3% of the cases
- a burglary in about 8% of the cases.

About half of the robberies happened at night, when it was more likely that the victims would be injured, and more than 40% took place on the street. Twenty percent occurred either at the victim's home or near it. A third of the robberies that happened at or in the victims' homes were committed by offenders with the right to be present, such as guests, relatives, or repair personnel.

Source: *Robbery victims.*

Domestic violence against women

From 1978–82 the National Crime Survey showed that once a woman experienced domestic violence, her risk of being victimized again was substantial. During a 6-month period following an incident of domestic violence, close to 32% of the women were victimized again.

About a third of the incidents of domestic violence against women in the NCS would be classified by police as rape, robbery, or aggravated assault. These are felonies in most States. The other two-thirds would likely be classified by police as simple assaults, a misdemeanor in most jurisdictions. Yet as many as half of these actually involved bodily injury as serious or more serious than 90% of all rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults.

Of domestic violence in the NCS, 7 out of 10 incidents were committed by the woman's spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend:

All cases of domestic violence	100%
Relatives	
Spouse	40
Ex-spouse	19
Parent or child	1
Sibling	9
Other relative	3
Close friends	
Boyfriend or ex-boyfriend	10
Friend	9
Other nonrelative	16

An estimated 52% of all incidents of domestic violence were reported to the police. Calling the police following the violence seems to reduce the risk of a husband's attacking his wife again within 6 months by as much as 62%.

Source: *Preventing domestic violence against women.*

Rape

During the 10 years from 1973–82 there were about 1.5 million rapes or attempted rapes in the United States.

Among rape and attempted rape victims—
- close to three-quarters are unmarried women
- two-thirds are under 25
- about half are from low-income families
- four-fifths are white, but compared to their proportion in the general population black women are significantly more likely than white women to be victims.

More than two-thirds of all rapes and attempted rapes occur at night—the highest proportion between 6 p.m. and midnight.

About half the rapes or attempted rapes are reported to the police. The reasons most often given for not reporting a rape or attempted rape to the police or other authorities are that—
- the incident was too private or personal
- the victim felt the police would be insensitive or ineffective.

Victims who said they did report the rape to the police most often said that they did so—
- to keep it from happening again or to others
- to punish the offender.

Over four-fifths of the rape victims reported that they took self-protective measures, including reasoning with the offender; fleeing from the offender; screaming or yelling for help; hitting, kicking, or scratching the offender; and using or brandishing a weapon.

Sources: *The crime of rape. Criminal victimization in the United States, 1985.*

Household burglary

Burglars commit three-fifths of all rapes and robberies in the home and a third of all household assaults. During the 10 years from 1973–82, 2.8 million violent crimes occurred during the course of burglaries, even though the vast majority of burglaries occur when no household member is present.

Someone is at home during 13% of all burglaries, and 30% of such incidents end in a violent crime.

Among all cases of burglary—
- a third are forcible entries
- 22% use force trying to gain entry
- 45% are unlawful entries in which the intruder has no legal right to be on the premises and no force is used to enter the premises.

Theft is involved in—
- 77% of all forcible entries
- 82% of unlawful entries where no force is used to gain entry.

Housing units most likely to be burglarized are rented rather than owned and are in multiunit dwellings containing three to nine units.

Urban households are more likely than suburban or rural households to be victims of forcible entries. However, for unlawful entry where force is not used to gain entry, the rates in urban, suburban, and rural households are very similar.

Burglary occurs more often in warmer than in colder months.

When the time of entry is known, victims of burglary report that about half the incidents occurred during the daytime and half occurred at night.

Source: *Household burglary.*

Bank robbery

Bank robberies—
- jumped from less than 500 a year prior to the 1960's to about 8,000 in 1980, increasing at a far faster rate than total robberies
- accounted for about 6% of all commercial robberies reported to Federal, State, and local authorities in 1982.

Of bank robberies investigated by the FBI that were studied—
- slightly more than 6% involved violence
- injuries occurred in slightly more than 2%
- death occurred in less than half of 1%.

Most bank robbers appear to be unsophisticated, unprofessional criminals:

- 76% of them used no disguise despite the widespread use of surveillance equipment.
- 86% never inspected the bank prior to the offense.
- 95% had no long-range scheme to avoid capture and to spend the money without being noticed.

The average dollar loss from bank robberies was about $3,300. In 1979 less than 20% of the amounts stolen were recovered.

Unlike other crimes bank robbery is almost always detected and almost always reported. About 2 in 3 bank robberies are cleared by arrest.

Of persons prosecuted for bank robbery—

- most had histories of prior arrests, convictions, and incarcerations
- 45% had served at least one prior term in excess of 1 year.

Source: *Bank robbery: Federal offenses and offenders.*

Automated teller machine loss and theft

The Nation's banks lost an estimated $70 to $100 million from automated teller machine (ATM) frauds in 1983.

That year about $262 billion were processed through 2.7 billion ATM transactions. Of a sample study of 2,700 transactions that prompted an accountholder complaint, about 45% appeared to involve fraud.

Of problem incidents studied, almost two-thirds involved withdrawals, almost a third of which were with a stolen or lost card.

To prevent unauthorized access, most ATM's require identification by a card and a personal identification number. According to the cardholders, the personal identification number of the cards that were used in ATM loss or theft was—

- recorded and kept near the card—typically in the purse or wallet—in 72% of the cases
- written on the card in 6% of the cases
- written and kept separate from the card or purse in 7% of the cases
- not written anyplace in 15% of the cases.

Sources: *Electronic fund transfer fraud. Electronic fund transfer fraud: Computer crime.*

Drugs

Evidence increasingly points to a link between drugs and the commission of crime because crime is—

- a frequent characteristic of the drug business
- an activity engaged in by drug users.

However, currently there is no single source for the extensive data on drugs and crime compiled by Federal, State, and local governments. To fill this need, BJS established a Data Center & Clearinghouse for Drugs & Crime at the end of fiscal 1987 funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Data Center & Clearinghouse is accessible via a toll-free telephone number, 800–666–3332.

The center began operations October 1, 1987, and is—

- gathering existing data on drugs and the justice system in Federal, State, and local governments as well as the private sector
- identifying data needs that are not currently being met
- evaluating not only the statistical sufficiency of the data, but also the adequacy of the data for policymaking
- serving as a single source for those who need drug statistics, who must now contact numerous sources
- preparing a comprehensive report on drugs and drug law enforcement in the United States in a nontechnical format suitable for a lay audience
- performing other services such as preparing special computer tabulations and special analyses of existing drug data to inform policymakers and the general public on topics of policy concern.

The Data Center & Clearinghouse is discussed in greater detail in the "New initiatives" section of this report. Also discussed in that section are the redesigns of the Uniform Crime Reporting program and the National Crime Survey; both will be collecting more drug-related data than in the past.

During the year BJS sponsored a public opinion poll of Americans' attitudes on the seriousness of various crimes and the appropriate punishment for persons committing them. This survey was conducted in preparation for the National Conference on Punishment for Criminal Offenses held in November 1987 (described in more detail in the "Public opinion on crime and punishment" section of this report). BJS presented these results in a press release on November 8, 1987, and is preparing them for publication during fiscal 1988.

Drug use is not only a health problem in this country, but the use of drugs by otherwise law-abiding citizens supports illegal drug trafficking and the crime associated with it. The BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics* annually presents the most current data available on self-reported drug use, as well as public opinion data about illegal drug use.

Care should be taken in using such data, particularly when comparing data from different polls where the wording or ordering of questions may be different and could influence results.

During fiscal 1987 analysis began of the 1986 National Prisoner Survey. The results of that survey will be published during fiscal 1988, including analysis of prisoner drug and alcohol use.

Drugs and crime

Abundant data from BJS surveys show the extent of drug and alcohol use by prison and jail inmates at the time of the offense for which they are incarcerated and at other times in their lives.

Most prisoners and jail inmates have used drugs at some point in their lives, and many have used them just before committing the crime for which they were imprisoned:

- Just before committing the crime for which they were imprisoned, a third of State prisoners and a quarter of convicted jail inmates said they had been under the influence of an illegal drug.
- More than half the State prisoners said they had taken illegal drugs during the month before committing the crime.
- Three-fourths of all jail inmates reported using illegal drugs at some time in their lives in 1983, up from the two-thirds reporting drug histories in 1978—
  —72% used marijuana
  —38% used cocaine
  —32% used amphetamines and 27% used barbiturates. (Methaqualone, LSD, and heroin each had been used by more than a fifth of the inmates.)

The proportion of jail inmates ever using heroin dropped from 1978 to 1983, but the proportion ever using cocaine and marijuana rose.

Among State prisoners drug offenders and burglars were the most likely to have been under the influence of drugs at the time of the offense. Among jail inmates the most likely to have been under such influence were drug offenders and property offenders.

Male prison inmates are somewhat more likely than female inmates to use drugs. However, the proportion who use heroin is somewhat greater among women than men.

Drug use and careers in crime appear to be related:

- The more convictions inmates had on their records, the more likely they were to have taken drugs in the month prior to committing the crime for which they were incarcerated.
- A study of Federal offenders found that those who use drugs (particularly those who use heroin) tend to
  —have worse criminal records than other Federal offenders
  —commit subsequent crimes, both drug and nondrug, at a higher rate than Federal offenders who do not use illegal drugs.

Sources: *Prisoners and drugs, Jail inmates 1983, Federal drug law violators*

Original sentence and time served by drug offenders

In Federal courts in 1986, 76% of convicted drug defendants were sentenced to prison. The following is the average sentence length for those sentenced to Federal prisons for—

Homicide	194 months
Robbery	161
Sex offenses	91
Drugs	70
Burglary	63
Assault	58
Auto theft	55
Weapons	54
Larceny/theft	46
Embezzlement	38

Federal sentences for drug offenses are longer than in the past. The average Federal prison sentence in the year ending June 30, 1986, for drug offenses was 38% longer than in 1979, a greater percentage increase in average sentence length than for all offenses combined (32%).

A study of 28 local jurisdictions found that 67% of those convicted of drug trafficking were sentenced to some kind of incarceration and 27% to incarceration for at least 1 year. This may reflect low amounts of illegal drugs (sometimes ounces) required to allow a defendant to be charged with possession with intent to sell rather than possession only. This could mean that relatively minor cases are pulling down the percent sentenced to incarceration.

In the 28 jurisdictions the average prison sentence lengths were—

- 157 months for rape
- 104 for robbery
- 81 for aggravated assault
- 65 for burglary
- 56 for drug trafficking.

Prisoners admitted to 23 State prisons in 1983 had average sentence lengths of—

- 100 months for all violent crimes
- 58 for property crimes
- 53 for drug offenses
- 45 for public-order offenses.

Typically, only a portion of the sentence handed down by the court is actually served in prison.

For Federal prisoners* the following is the average time served and percent of sentence served for—

Offense	Average time served	Percent of sentence served
Robbery	72.9 months	49.0%
Drugs	**36.5**	**58.6**
Weapons	31.5	69.4
Monetary crime	26.5	63.8

*Federal prison inmates who were sentenced to more than 1 year in prison, who had their first parole hearing during the year prior to June 30, 1986, and who were released or scheduled for release as of January 1, 1987.

Of State prisoners released from 23 State prison systems in 1983—

- drug offenders had served an average of 18.9 months (including credited jail time)
- violent offenders, 38.2 months
- property offenders, 19.4 months
- public order offenders, 13 months.

Sources: Sentencing and time served: Federal offenses and offenders. Sentencing outcomes in 28 felony courts. Prison admissions and releases, 1983.

Drug offender profiles

The typical accused Federal drug law offender—

- is male
- is about 30 years old
- is most likely to be white
- has a 7% chance of opiate use or addiction and a 14% chance of current or past abuse of other drugs.

Persons charged with drug possession tend to be younger than those charged with the sale of drugs and to be less well educated, less often married, less wealthy, and less often repeat offenders than persons charged with other drug offenses.

Illegal drug producers tend to be the oldest of all.

Source: *Federal drug law violators.*

Drug use in the general population

As presented in the BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*—

- 54.2% of 1985 high school seniors reported having ever used marijuana/hashish
- 17.3% reported having ever used cocaine
- 1.2% reported having ever used heroin.

Reported illegal drug use of high school seniors, 1985

Drug	Used within the last— 12 months*	30 days
Marijuana/hashish	40.6%	25.7%
Inhalants	7.2	2.9
Hallucinogens	7.7	2.5
Cocaine	13.1	6.7
Heroin	0.6	0.3
Other opiates	5.9	2.3
Sedatives	5.8	2.4
Tranquilizers	6.1	2.1

*Including the last 30 days.

Through 1985, fewer students were using marijuana; more were using cocaine.

- 13.1% of high school seniors in 1985 reported cocaine use within the past 12 months, up from 5.6% in 1975.
- Reported marijuana use by high school seniors in the previous 12 months fell to 40.6% in 1985, reaching 1975 levels after peaking at 50.8% in 1979.
- Among young adults (high school graduates 1 to 8 years beyond high school) 19.9% reported using cocaine in the 12 months preceding the 1985 interview and 40.6% reported using marijuana.
- Self-reports of drug use among high school seniors underrepresent drug use among youth of that age group because high school dropouts and truants are not included, and these groups are expected to have more involvement with drugs than those who stay in school.

Source: Lloyd D. Johnston et al. *Monitoring the future 1975–1985*, as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1986.*

Public opinion about drugs

As presented in the BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*, 13% of the respondents to a 1986 New York Times/CBS News Poll reported that drugs are the most important problem facing their community. Females were more likely to rank drugs first, 14% vs. 12% of men; blacks were more likely than whites, 18% vs. 12%. However, 24% rated drugs as one of the two or three worst problems and an additional 35% said they were a serious problem.

When asked about spending for various social problems, 58% of the respondents to a National Opinion Research Center (NORC) poll said we are spending too little to deal with drug addiction.

Attitudes toward public policy on illegal drug use

	Agree	Disagree
The U.S. Government should spend as much money as necessary to stop the flow of drugs into this country.	78%	20%
Drug abuse will never be stopped because a large number of Americans will continue to want drugs and be willing to pay lots of money for them.	83	14
Convicted heroin dealers should get the death penalty.	33	63

A third of the respondents felt it would reduce illegal drug use "a lot" if the Federal Government made a much greater effort to fight the drug problem; another third thought it would reduce drug use a little; a fourth thought it would make no difference.

When asked if they thought most Federal officeholders were serious when they made proposals for Federal programs to deal with drug abuse—

- 24% thought they were serious
- 60% thought most of them were using the issue for publicity.

Half of the respondents in a 1985 Gallup Poll said the possession of small amounts of marijuana should be treated as a criminal offense, up from 41% in 1977.

People with first-time convictions for cocaine or crack selling should receive the following punishment according to the respondents in a 1986 New York Times/CBS News Poll:

More than 1 year in jail	43%
1 year in jail	22
30 days in jail	16
Fine and probation	12
Death*	1

*Response volunteered.

The 1987 BJS survey of public attitudes on punishment and the seriousness of crime asked what types of punishment persons selling cocaine to others for resale and persons using cocaine should receive, with the following results:

	Most severe punishment preferred		
	Jail or prison	Probation	Fine or restitution
Cocaine—			
Sold for resale	89.9%	7.6%	2.5%
Used	57.9	35.3	6.8

That survey also found that the public ranks selling cocaine to someone who will resell it as very serious. The respondents ranked it ninth in seriousness of the crimes they were asked about, higher than an assault with injury and robbery of $1,000 with a gun where the victim is hospitalized. The higher ranking offenses involved either death or rape. Cocaine use ranked 18th out of the 24 offenses, higher than larceny of $100 or less, assault with no injury, and burglary of $10.

High school seniors have been surveyed annually since 1975. In 1985—

- 69% reported worrying often or sometimes about drug abuse
- 17% felt using marijuana should be entirely legal, down from 33% feeling that way in 1978.

Percent of 1985 high school seniors reporting they could obtain drugs fairly easily or very easily

Marijuana/hashish	85.5%
Amphetamines	66.4
Tranquilizers	54.7
Barbiturates	51.3
Cocaine	48.9
LSD	30.5
Heroin	21.0

The students were asked how harmful the use of drugs was. The percents saying people were taking a great risk of harming themselves in regularly using the following were—

- marijuana/hashish, 70%
- LSD, 83%
- cocaine, 79%
- heroin, 86%.

Sources: New York Times/CBS News Poll data; National Opinion Research Center data; Lloyd D. Johnston et al., *Monitoring the future 1975–1985*; Lloyd D. Johnston, Patrick M. O'Malley, and Jerald G. Bachman, *Drug use among American high school students, college students, and other young adults: National trends through 1985*; Peter Begans, *ABC News-Washington Post Poll*; George G. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll*; all as reported in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1986*. Joseph E. Jacoby and Christopher S. Dunn, "National survey on punishment for criminal offenses," (as presented at the National Conference on Punishment for Criminal Offenses, November 9, 1987), to be published by BJS in fiscal 1988.

The cost of crime

One of the questions policymakers, the media, and members of the general public most often ask BJS is "What is the total cost of crime to society?"

In all likelihood there will never be a simple answer to this seemingly simple question for a variety of reasons:

- Many costs to society of criminal activity cannot be measured directly. These include monies that might have been channeled into legal purchases if they had not been diverted for illegal purposes such as gambling, drug purchases, and prostitution. Organized crime, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration result in economic losses to society, but these defy direct measurement. Also difficult to measure are the losses from fraudulent activities that the victims are embarrassed to report.

- Some of the costs of crime to society are not quantifiable. These include nonmonetary costs to victims, such as pain and suffering from injury, psychological distress, fear, and similar effects on victims and their families and friends.

However, BJS does measure some components of the cost of crime to society. One source is the National Crime Survey, which measures the value of property stolen or damaged through criminal incidents and the cost of medical care resulting from victimization.

Another cost of crime to society is that of operating the criminal justice system. In fiscal 1987 a report was issued containing 1985 expenditure and employment data in greater detail than possible since 1979 (*Justice expenditure and employment, 1985*, BJS Bulletin, March 1987). The Bureau of Justice Assistance sponsored this survey to collect data needed for the allocation of block grant formula funds under the Justice Assistance Act of 1984. It was possible to collect considerably more detailed data on corrections than since 1979, allowing the development of trend data showing the rapid increase in corrections expenditure, particularly for institutions as opposed to probation and parole.

Economic cost of crime to victims

Total economic loss to victims of personal and household crimes, 1985*

Type of crime	Gross loss (millions)
All crimes	$13,029
Personal crimes	3,363
—of violence	749
Rape	15
Robbery	492
Assault	242
—of theft	2,614
Personal larceny	
with contact	80
without contact	2,534
Household crimes	9,666
Burglary	3,499
Household larceny	1,607
Motor vehicle theft	4,560

*Includes losses from property theft or damage, cash losses, medical expenses, and lost pay because of victimization (including time spent with the police in investigation and in court and time spent in replacing lost property) and other crime-related costs.

A study of 1981 NCS data found that—

- nearly 75% of the cost stemmed from the three household crimes: burglary, household larceny, and motor vehicle theft
- among the three violent crimes (assault, robbery, rape), the largest loss was from robbery
- the median loss for a violent crime victim was twice as high as for a personal theft victim; motor vehicle theft gave rise to the highest median loss for all crimes
- most losses were from theft of property or cash (92%); 6% were from property damage and 2% from medical expenses
- about 65% of the medical costs resulted from assault—the most common of the three violent crimes
- 36% of all losses were recovered or reimbursed within 6 months after the offense
- median losses from personal and household crimes were greater for black than for white victims.

Sources: *The economic cost of crime to victims*. Unpublished National Crime Survey data.

Cost of the justice system

Federal, State, and local spending for all civil and criminal justice activities in fiscal 1985 was $45.6 billion—less than 3% of all government spending in this country:

Government spending by activity

Social insurance payments	20.8%
National defense and international relations	18.3
Education	13.0
Interest on debt	10.9
Housing and the environment	6.8
Public welfare	6.0
Hospitals and health	4.0
Transportation	3.6
Justice	**2.8**
Space research and technology	0.5

Government spending (including direct and intergovernmental expenditures) is:

- Local, $25.4 billion
- State, $16.0 billion
- Federal, $5.8 billion

Of each justice dollar—

- 48¢ was spent on police protection
- 22¢ on the courts and other legal activities
- 29¢ on prisons and other correctional costs.

Less than 1¢ of every dollar spent by Federal, State, and local governments went into operation of the Nation's correctional system (including jails, prisons, probation, and parole).

Total government spending on civil and criminal justice was $191 per person in 1985. State and local per capita spending varies greatly by State from the national average of $167:

- West Virginia, Mississippi, and Arkansas spent the least (less than $90 per person).
- The most is spent by New York ($293), Nevada ($278), Alaska ($592), and the District of Columbia ($613).

The percentage of direct expenditure for civil and criminal justice varies by level of government:

- .6% Federal
- 5.4% State
- 13.1% county
- 10.0% cities and towns
- 6.1% State and local combined.

1985 data are comparable to data collected for 1971 through 1979. Between 1979 and 1985, justice expenditures at all levels of government increased by 75%:

- corrections 116%
- prosecution and legal services 96%
- public defense 77%
- courts 71%
- police 58%.

Additional spending data are presented in the "BJS reports on . . . corrections funding" section of this report.

Sources: *Justice expenditure and employment, 1985. Justice expenditure and employment in the United States, 1971–79.*

The public response to crime

The public's response to crime includes—

- decisions of individual victims on whether to report the crime to the police
- actions taken by victims (and their family and friends) in response to crime (such as attempting to minimize the risk of future victimizations through changes in behavior, purchase of burglar alarms, and guard dogs)
- similar actions taken by strangers who read or hear of crime through media accounts or other sources
- an increase (or decrease) in fear of crime
- changes in opinions on the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of the criminal justice system.

The National Crime Survey (NCS) measures the extent to which victims have reported crimes to the police and the reasons for reporting or not reporting; these are major justice indicators that BJS releases annually. During the previous fiscal year BJS issued an indepth study of these data. Another 1986 analysis of NCS data studied domestic violence and the effect that reporting it to the police had on recurrence.

Also during that year a special one-time supplement to the NCS, called the 1984 Victim Risk Supplement, was analyzed. This supplement collected information about crime prevention measures taken at home and at the workplace and about individuals' perceptions of the safety of their homes, neighborhoods, and places of work.

Public opinion polls by organizations such as Gallup, ABC News, and the National Opinion Research Center ask questions about how fearful people are of crime and about their confidence in criminal justice agencies. Data from these polls are assembled in the annual BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*.

During the year BJS sponsored a public opinion poll of Americans' attitudes on the seriousness of various crimes and the appropriate punishment for persons committing them. This survey was conducted in preparation for the National Conference on Punishment for Criminal Offenses held in November 1987. BJS presented these results in a press release November 8, 1987, and is preparing them for publication during fiscal 1988.

Care should be taken in using public opinion data, particularly when comparing data from different polls where the wording or ordering of questions may be different and could influence results.

Preventing crime

In 1984 about a third of all households reported taking one or more of these crime prevention measures:

Engraving valuables	25%
Neighborhood watch	7
Burglar alarm	7

Black and white households are equally likely to take at least one of these measures.

The higher the household income, the more likely it is that the home has a burglar alarm. One in six families with incomes of $50,000 or more have one; this is twice the rate of families with incomes between $25,000 and $50,000 and three times that of families with incomes less than $25,000.

Almost a fifth of all families live in communities that have neighborhood watch programs and, of these, about 38% of the families participate in these programs.

Households in areas with neighborhood watch programs and those participating in such programs vary with income:

Household income	Percent— With programs	Participating
Less than $7,500	14%	4%
$7,500–9,999	14	5
$10,000–14,999	16	6
$15,000–24,999	19	7
$25,000–29,999	22	9
$30,000–49,999	25	11
$50,000 or more	30	15

One in four urban families live in a neighborhood with a crime watch program as do 1 in 5 suburban families and 1 in 8 families who live outside metropolitan areas.

Of the households surveyed, 20% had at least one of these features:

- a fence or barricade at the entrance
- a doorkeeper, guard, or receptionist
- an intercom or phone for gaining entrance to the building
- surveillance cameras
- bars on windows or doors
- signs indicating alarms or security devices
- other warning signs, such as "beware of the dog."

Percent of respondents who reported at least one security measure at work:

Security measure	Percent
Receptionist or guard who checks people in	42%
Burglar alarm system	33
Police or guard for protection	30
Pass or ID required for entrance	19
Locked entry during work hours	16
Surveillance camera	16
Guard dog	2

Source: *Crime prevention measures*

Reporting crime

Less than two-fifths of all NCS crimes (rape, robbery, assault, personal and household larceny, household burglary, and motor vehicle theft) are reported to the police:

- The crimes most serious in terms of economic loss or injury are the crimes most likely to be reported; nearly half of NCS violent crimes are reported, but only a fourth of the personal crimes of theft and a third of household crimes are reported.
- The most frequently reported crimes (excluding murder) are motor vehicle theft (73% in 1986), aggravated assault (59%), and robbery (58%).

The percent of NCS respondents saying they had reported the incident to the police grew from 32% in 1973 to 37% in 1986.

Generally, demographic characteristics (sex, age, race) of the victims make less difference in reporting rates than does the type of crime.

Most crimes are reported by the victim or a member of the victimized household. Of reported—

- personal crimes, 60% are reported by the victim, 13% by another household member, and 22% by some one else; 3% are discovered by the police
- household crimes, 88% are reported by a household member and 10% by someone else; 2% are discovered by the police.

The reason most often given for reporting a violent crime to the police was to keep the crime from happening again. The desire to recover property was the reason most often given for reporting both personal theft and household crimes.

The reason most often given for not reporting property crimes was that the crime was not important enough to be reported to the police. For violent crimes, it was that the matter was private or personal.

Almost half of all cases of domestic violence reported by women in NCS surveys for 1978–82 were not reported to the police.

Calling the police about an act of domestic violence seems to reduce the risk of a husband attacking his wife again within 6 months by as much as 62%.

During 1978–82, 41% of the married women who were attacked by their husbands but did not call the police were assaulted again within an average of 6 months, but only 15% of the women who did call the police were attacked again.

Crimes against teenagers were less likely to be reported to the police than crimes against adults.

Sources: *Criminal victimization, 1986. Reporting crimes to the police. Preventing domestic violence against women. Teenage victims.*

Fear of crime

In 1984 the National Crime Survey included a Victim Risk Supplement. Of the persons asked—

- about 32% said they felt their neighborhood was very safe from crime
- 59% said their neighborhood was fairly safe
- 10% said it was unsafe.

More than 90% of the people asked said they felt very or fairly safe at their workplace.

As presented in the 1986 BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*, 82% of high school students surveyed in 1985 said they worried "often" or "sometimes" about crime and violence. More females (88%) than males (77%) reported such worries.

A higher percentage of high school students were worried about crime than about—

- hunger and poverty, 70%
- drug abuse, 69%
- chance of nuclear war, 65%
- economic problems, 60%
- pollution, 47%
- race relations, 43%
- energy shortages, 34%
- using open land for housing or industry, 30%
- population growth, 23%
- urban decay, 18%.

The 1985 *Sourcebook* presented the results of a 1984 Media General/Associated Press Poll. In that poll the following percentages of respondents reported being concerned about—

Someone forcing his way into your home and stealing your possessions	61%
Someone robbing or mugging you on the street	49
Someone raping you or a family member	62

Sources: *Crime prevention measures: Monitoring the future 1975–1985*, Lloyd D. Johnston et al., as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1986*. Media General/Associated Press Poll, as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1985*.

Public confidence in the criminal justice system

As presented in the 1986 BJS *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics*, 88% of the respondents to a 1985 Gallup Poll rated the honesty and ethical standards of the police as average or higher than average. Similar ratings were given when the same question was asked in 1977, 1981, and 1983.

The 1984 *Sourcebook* presented data from a 1982 ABC News Poll that asked a national sample if someone in their household had called the police in the past year. Of 35% saying yes—

- 72% said the police responded within a "short time"
- 22% said the police arrived a "long time" after they were called
- 4% volunteered a response of "somewhere in between"
- 2% didn't know.

The same poll asked how much confidence respondents had in the police to prevent crimes such as robberies from happening and how much confidence they had in the police to solve such crimes after they had happened:

	Confidence in the ability of the police	
	To prevent crimes	To solve crimes
All respondents	100%	100%
Great deal	18	14
Good amount	43	46
Very little	33	34
None at all	5	5
No opinion, refused	1	1

The 1986 *Sourcebook* presented the results of a 1986 poll conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). That poll asked respondents to a national survey, "In general, do you think the courts in this area deal too harshly or not harshly enough with criminals?" They responded as follows:

Too harshly	3%
Not harshly enough	85
About right	8
Don't know	4

This question has been asked for more than a decade. During this time—

- a decreasing percentage felt that the courts were dealing too harshly with criminals (6% in 1972 to 3% in 1986)
- an increasing percentage felt the courts were not dealing harshly enough (66% in 1972 to 85% in 1984)
- however, the current levels were reached in the middle to late 1970's and have been relatively stable ever since.

The percent of high school students reporting that they believe there are "considerable" or "great" problems of dishonesty and morality in the courts and justice system declined from 30% in 1975 to 23% in 1985.

Sources: ABC News Poll as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1984*; Gallup Poll; the National Opinion Research Center polls; and Lloyd D. Johnston et al., *Monitoring the future 1975–1985*, as presented in *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics, 1986*.

Public opinion on crime and punishment

Americans overwhelmingly support incarceration as the most appropriate punishment for serious offenders.

In a national survey of 1,920 U.S. residents, 71% percent said a jail or prison sentence was the most suitable penalty for a group of 24 specific crime scenarios about which they were asked, including rape, robbery, assault, burglary, theft, property damage, drunk driving, and drug offenses committed in different ways.

Punishment views among the survey respondents did not vary significantly according to their age, race, sex, or regional background.

In general, survey participants approved of probation, fines, and restitution when combined with incarceration rather than as substitutes for imprisonment.

For instance, in robberies of $1,000 or more during which the offender brandishes a gun and the victim has to be hospitalized for his or her injuries, 92% of those asked said incarceration was the right penalty, and the average prison term selected was more than 10 years. Forty-eight percent of the respondents also selected restitution as an appropriate penalty for this type of robbery, but almost all of them chose it in combination with a jail or prison term.

For rapes in which there was no additional injury to the victim, 94% of the respondents chose a jail or prison sentence and an average term of more than 15 years.

For assaults resulting in victim hospitalization, 82% selected jail or prison, with an average term of almost 8 years.

For household burglary and losses of $1,000 or more, 81% chose incarceration and an average term of 4.5 years.

The survey also found that cocaine use was considered more serious than thefts of $1,000 or more. Fifty-eight percent of those asked chose incarceration as the appropriate punishment.

The sale of cocaine to others for resale was viewed as more serious than an assault resulting in hospitalization or a robbery with a weapon. Ninety percent of the respondents selected prison or jail terms, with an average length of 10.5 years.

Drunk driving resulting in a victim's death was judged more serious than a rape in which the victim was not otherwise injured and more serious than a robbery that results in a victim's hospitalization. Ninety-six percent of the survey participants chose incarceration for this crime. The average term was almost 12 years.

Survey respondents recommended periods of incarceration that were longer than those typically being served in prison throughout the country.

The respondents were more likely to select imprisonment and to give longer prison terms to offenders who had prior convictions for violent crimes or prior prison sentences. In general, however, the seriousness of the crime was the major factor in the various choices.

When asked about their reasons for selecting a particular type of punishment, the respondents said the reason was "very important" or "somewhat important" according to the following percentages:

	Very important	Somewhat important
To deter the offender from doing it again	79%	12%
To make a public statement that such behavior will not be tolerated	76	13
To rehabilitate the offender	72	13
To give the offender what he or she deserves	70	20
To deter others from crime	70	19
To incapacitate the offender from committing more crimes	58	13
To respond as my religion or my morality requires	48	21
To get even with the offender by making him or her suffer for what he or she has done	25	21

Source: BJS press release, November 8, 1987, presenting results from Joseph E. Jacoby and Christopher S. Dunn, "National survey on punishment for criminal offenses," as presented at the National Conference on Punishment for Criminal Offenses, November 9, 1987.

Adjudication and sentencing

Policymakers and the public are particularly concerned about—

- what happens to accused offenders when charges are brought against them and their cases are heard in court
- whether they are released on "technicalities"
- whether they are allowed to plead guilty to lesser charges, thus not receiving the full measure of legal sanctions due to them for the crimes they have committed
- whether they delay court proceedings through legal maneuverings that discourage witnesses and victims from continued participation in the prosecution
- whether the sentences received and served by convicted offenders reflect the seriousness of the crimes.

Methods of case processing and terminology vary across the country. Consequently, much of the information on this phase of criminal justice is based on studies of limited numbers of jurisdictions.

Of major importance in fiscal 1987 was the continuation of several projects directed toward development of nationally representative court case-processing and outcome data and improved data on other aspects of the judicial phase of criminal justice, such as pretrial release. (These efforts are described in the "New initiatives" section of this report.)

During fiscal 1987 BJS prepared individual summaries of each State's 1986 felony laws from the State's annotated code and published selected results in *State felony courts and felony laws* (BJS Bulletin, August 1987). Complete results will be published in *Felony laws of the 50 States and the District of Columbia* in fiscal 1988.

State felony courts and felony laws also contained data that were collected in fiscal 1986 in the process of updating the sampling frame needed to draw a nationally representative sample of felony courts. These data included court characteristics and the numbers of cases filed and disposed.

The Felony Sentencing Outcomes Project produced *Sentencing outcomes in 28 felony courts 1985* (BJS Final Report, August 1987):

- In fiscal 1987 BJS expanded this project to cover a nationally representative sample of 100 jurisdictions, with the Census Bureau assuming responsibility for collecting data for most of the added courts.
- Data collection is underway on the sentences received by more than 25,000 convicted felons for homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, drug trafficking, and all other felonies.
- For the first time data will be available that reflect felony sentencing for the Nation as a whole.

• The project will study the use of different kinds and degrees of sanctions and will examine the impact on sentencing patterns of such factors as crime severity, different types of sentencing systems, the number of conviction offenses, and the use of pleas versus trials.

One source of data on local prosecution is the management information systems maintained by prosecutors in jurisdictions throughout the country. The BJS-sponsored Prosecution of Felony Arrests Project obtains case-processing data from such systems in some jurisdictions:

• It collects information on case attrition, guilty pleas, final dispositions, and case-processing time.

• In fiscal 1987 *The prosecution of felony arrests, 1982* was completed and submitted for publication, which will be in fiscal 1988. It contains full details on felony case-processing data for 37 jurisdictions.

• The number of jurisdictions participating in this project has grown from 13 supplying 1977 data to 28 for 1980 and 37 for 1982.

A third adjudication project being conducted for BJS is a major study of burglars and robbers brought to the attention of local prosecutors in 15 of the Nation's largest counties. Data collection continued in fiscal 1987. The study describes the impact of different policies and practices on the disposition and sentencing outcomes of robbery and burglary cases.

Of major importance during the year was the publication of reports on the judicial processing of white-collar offenders, one report covering Federal offenders and the other, State offenders: *White collar crime: Federal offenses and offenders* (BJS Special Report, September 1987) and *Tracking offenders: White-collar crime* (BJS Special Report, November 1986).

These reports are the culmination of methodological development efforts discussed in previous BJS annual reports in the "New initiatives" section.

One of these reports was produced from the Integrated Federal Justice Data Base under the Federal Justice Statistics Program:

• This data base traces Federal case processing from investigation through prosecution, adjudication, and corrections.

• It includes input from the United States Attorneys, United States Courts, the Bureau of Prisons, and the United States Parole Commission.

• This is the first time that such Federal justice data have been compiled in a single data series.

• In addition to the white-collar crime report, two reports were issued in fiscal 1987, *Sentencing and time served: Federal offenses and offenders* (BJS Special Report, June 1987) and *The Federal civil justice system* (BJS Bulletin, July 1987).

• Two reports specific to the judicial processing of Federal defendants are scheduled for fiscal 1988, one on pretrial release and the other on Federal drug offenders.

During fiscal 1987 BJS continued its recently expanded program of analyzing Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS) data from States having such systems:

- The OBTS systems follow offenders from arrest through final disposition.
- In fiscal 1987 BJS completed analysis and published findings of State OBTS data on the white-collar crimes of forgery/counterfeiting, fraud, and embezzlement in *Tracking offenders: White-collar crime* (BJS Special Report, November 1986).
- Eight States and one territory were able to supply data: California, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, and the Virgin Islands.

In 1986 complete results of the first national survey of public defense systems in 10 years were published in *National criminal defense systems study* (BJS Final Report, October 1986). This report contained detailed tabulations from the study. A project to update these data began in fiscal 1987 and will be published in a report in fiscal 1988.

Data on sentences received and served by prison inmates are available from *Prison admissions and releases, 1983* (BJS Special Report, March 1986).

During fiscal 1987 work began on an international study of time served in prison in five countries. Results will be published in fiscal 1988.

Civil and criminal cases filed and disposed

In 1985, 1.5 million felony cases were filed in the Nation's 3,235 State felony courts, an average of nearly 500 per county. Eighteen counties had more than 10,000 felony filings each. Half of all counties in the Nation, however, had fewer than 100 filings each, and no felony cases were filed in 32 sparsely populated counties.

The 75 largest counties (those with populations of about 600,000 persons or more) accounted for about half of the reported crime and 43% of all arrests in the United States, but only about 28% of all felony court filings and convictions. These counties averaged about 5,500 felony case filings each.

The smallest counties (2,650 counties with populations of less than 100,000 persons) accounted for 16% of reported crime, but 23% of all arrests and 38% of all felony court filings and convictions.

Arrests in the South were more likely to result in prosecution and conviction in a felony court than arrests in other regions. For every 1,000 arrests in the South there were 143 felony court convictions; in the West, there were 58; in the Northeast, 60; and in the Midwest, 78.

After cases are filed with the court, the court takes action to dispose of them. Felony courts dispose of cases through conviction, acquittal, and dismissal or by some other means. In 1985 about 1.5 million felony cases were disposed by the Nation's felony courts, an average of nearly 500 per county. Twenty counties disposed over 10,000 cases each. Half of all counties had less than 100 dispositions each, and no felony cases were disposed in 31 counties. The 75 largest counties averaged 5,300 felony dispositions.

Nationwide, 69% of felony cases were disposed through conviction. Felony court convictions numbered one million in 1985, and the average per county was a little over 300. Four counties had over 10,000 convictions each. Half of all counties had less than 70 convictions, and 41 counties had no felony court convictions. The 75 largest counties averaged about 3,900 convictions.

Not all of these convictions were for felonies. Nearly 80% of the courts reported that felonies reduced to misdemeanors were included in their statistics on felony court dispositions.

Civil cases filed in U.S. District Courts (Federal courts) reached 254,828 in the 12 months ending June 30, 1986, six times as many as criminal cases filed in these courts (41,490).

The number of civil cases filed in the Federal courts almost doubled between 1976 and 1986 and almost tripled from 1970 through 1986. Filings decreased from 1985 to 1986, however.

Sources: *State felony courts and felony laws. The Federal civil justice system.*

Felony courts

In the United States there are 3,128 counties and county equivalents (parishes, boroughs, independent cities, and the District of Columbia). Nearly all of them have State-level courts that conduct trials for all types of felony cases. These courts have various names. They are called—

- circuit courts in 16 States
- district courts in 15 States
- superior courts in 13 States and the District of Columbia
- other names in 2 States
- a combination of names in 4 States.

Collectively, these circuit, district, and superior courts form the Nation's State felony courts.

The vast majority of counties has one court responsible for deciding cases arising out of alleged violations of State felony laws.* Only 19 jurisdictions have no felony court: 15 independent cities in Virginia, 3 counties in South Dakota and Wisconsin that are largely Indian reservations, and 1 county in Rhode Island. Felonies committed in these 19 jurisdictions sometimes are tried in nearby counties.

Courts vary in terms of how they define a case. In two-thirds of all courts, each defendant equals one case. In the rest each charge or each indictment equals one case regardless of the number of defendants. Consequently, the number of cases reported is not the same as the number of persons who appeared in felony courts or who were convicted.

The felony court in 326 counties (representing 10% of all counties) reported that the misdemeanor court accepts guilty pleas to felony charges; the felony court in 300 of these 326 counties further reported that the misdemeanor courts also sentence all felons whose guilty pleas they accept.

Source: *State felony courts and felony laws.*

*The term court, as it is used here, should not be confused with courthouses or courtrooms. For example, if a State has a system of eight circuit courts throughout the State, they would be counted as eight courts.

Local prosecution

Differences in local laws, agencies, resources, standards, and procedures result in varying responses to crime in each jurisdiction:

- For example, among 16 jurisdictions supplying data for 1981, two reject no cases prior to filing because the police file cases directly with the court.
- Across the other jurisdictions the rejection rate ranged from 3% to 47%.

A high rate of rejections at screening is because the prosecutor has a conscious policy to weed out weak cases before they enter the court system. In general—

- jurisdictions with high screening rates have low dismissal rates
- those with low screening rates have high dismissal rates.

Most felony arrests do not result in a trial:

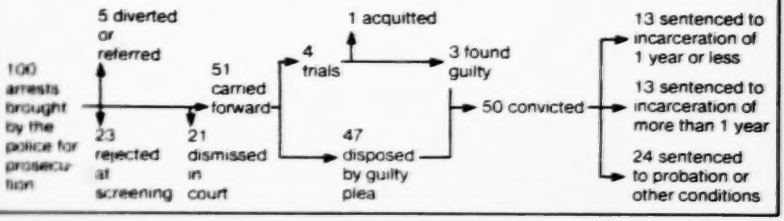
- From a third to more than half of all arrests are rejected at screening or dismissed.
- Most of the rest result in a guilty plea.

Evidence-related deficiencies and witness problems—

- account for more than half of rejections at screening
- are also common reasons for dismissals.

Guilty pleas rather than trials account for most felony convictions (an average of 88% of the 1981 felony convictions across the 27 jurisdictions studied).

Typical outcome of 100 felony arrests brought by the police for prosecution in 37 jurisdictions, 1982


100 arrests brought by the police for prosecution
5 diverted or referred
23 rejected at screening
51 carried forward
21 dismissed in court
4 trials
1 acquitted
3 found guilty
47 disposed by guilty plea
50 convicted
13 sentenced to incarceration of 1 year or less
13 sentenced to incarceration of more than 1 year
24 sentenced to probation or other conditions

The use of guilty pleas in felony cases varies greatly among jurisdictions:

- Some jurisdictions have policies that result in a high rate of guilty pleas.
- Others go to trial more frequently.

Most guilty pleas are to the most serious charge filed by the prosecutor. In 11 of 16 jurisdictions studied, close to 60% or more of the guilty pleas were to the top charge.

Few cases are brought to trial. On average, 4 of every 100 arrests went to trial in 1981.

Defendants charged with serious crimes are more likely than those with less serious charges to demand a trial.

Most trials by jury result in conviction:

- Of 26 jurisdictions providing data for 1981, an average of 73% of the cases that went to trial resulted in conviction.
- Individual jurisdiction rates ranged from 52% to 88%.

Sources: *The prosecution of felony arrests, 1981. The prosecution of felony arrests, 1982.*

Felony case-processing time

On the average, in a study of 12 mostly urban counties about half the felonies for which court charges were filed were disposed within 3 1/2 months.

The average time for disposition was a little less than 5 months for felonies that resulted in indictments or were otherwise bound over for a trial in a State felony court.

Felony cases that went to trial took about twice as long to complete as those with guilty pleas or dismissals. Even when felonies went to trial, the average time from arrest to disposition was less than 8 months.

Generally, the more serious the charge, the longer it took to process the case.

Processing times are greatly influenced by how the cases are handled after the charges are first filed in court:
- Some felony charges are reduced to misdemeanors and the cases disposed of in lower courts.
- Other felony cases are sent to grand juries or are otherwise ordered to trial in a higher court.

Felony cases typically take longer to process than cases in lower courts:
- Unlike misdemeanor cases, they typically require preliminary hearings or grand jury presentations.
- They also more frequently require full trials.

The average processing time in the 12 jurisdictions for all felony cases filed with the courts according to the most serious charge were:

Homicide	6.2 months
Sexual assault	4.2
Robbery	3.5
Burglary	3.2
Larceny	3.2

Many factors influence case disposition times, but delay-reduction policies of prosecutors and courts are among the most significant.

Source: *Felony case-processing time.*

Federal prosecution and pretrial release

In the Federal courts and in the State and local courts studied, about 65% of the defendants are released pending trial.

Of all Federal defendants released in 1979—

- about 50% were on unsecured bond
- 23% were on personal recognizance
- 14% were on deposit bond
- 9% were on surety bond
- less than 2% were on collateral bond.

In Federal courts the highest bail amounts tended to be imposed on defendants accused of the most serious crimes who had extensive criminal records and weak social and economic ties.

Of Federal defendants released, about 10% were rearrested for new crimes, violated the conditions of their release, or failed to appear for trial. In State and local courts, pretrial misconduct occurred three times as often. This difference may be attributed to the large number of white-collar offenders prosecuted in the Federal courts.

During the same bail period Federal defendants with serious criminal records were more likely to be rearrested or fail to appear for trial (35%) than defendants with less serious records (20%) or those with no records (8%).

The longer a defendant waits for a trial, the greater is the probability of misconduct. The likelihood was—

- 10% for Federal defendants free on bail for 90 days
- 14% for those on bail for 180 days
- 17% for those on bail for 270 days.

Source: *Pretrial release and misconduct: Federal offenses and offenders.*

Indigent defense

The Constitution grants a person accused of a crime punishable by a term of incarceration a right to an attorney. The courts have ruled that the defense of accused persons must be provided regardless of the defendants' ability to pay for such counsel. Therefore, the public bears the costs of indigent defense services.

The Nation spent almost $625 million in 1982 for indigent criminal defense services in about 3.2 million State and local court cases.

Spending for indigent defense in 1982 was—

- 44% greater than the estimated $435 million spent during 1980
- 213% greater than the estimated $200 million spent in 1976.

The average cost of an indigent defense case nationwide was $196—ranging from $567 in Hawaii to $85 in Oklahoma.

Assigned counsel systems that require the appointment of private attorneys dominate service delivery patterns. They are used in 60% of all counties, whereas 34% use public defender systems, and 6% use contract systems.

Public defender systems predominate in 43 of the 50 largest counties in the United States and serve 68% of the Nation's population.

A growing number of cases are no longer being handled by public defenders, mainly because of the increasingly strict definition of what constitutes a conflict of interest and limits on the number of cases the public defender is able to handle.

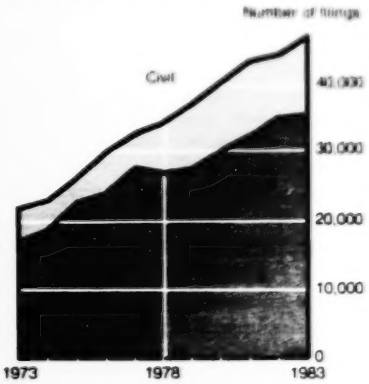
Of all counties studied, 75% have some form of recoupment requiring defendants to repay a portion of their defense costs, but 25% of the counties that require recoupment reported that no payments were received in 1982.

Sources: *Criminal defense systems: A national survey*. *National criminal defense systems study*.

Appeals and habeas corpus

State appeals court cases more than doubled during 1973–83.

Civil and criminal appeals filed, 1973-83 (38 States)



The increase—114% for civil cases and 107% for criminal cases—was greater than the 90% increase in Federal appeals filed in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Both civil and criminal caseloads increased by about 4% per year since 1978, not nearly as fast as appellate filings.

Criminal appeals made up only 10% to 15% of the total appeals until the 1960's, when a rapid increase occurred. In the past decade criminal appeals accounted for 43% to 46% of all appeals.

The number of Federal habeas corpus petitions (in which prisoners challenge the validity of their State convictions after they have exhausted all other appeals) rose nearly 700% between 1961 and 1982.

Only a small number of inmates (1.8%) who filed habeas corpus petitions were successful in gaining any type of release.

Many of the same prisoners filed successive habeas corpus petitions for State and Federal court review of their conviction and/or detention.

Sources: *The growth of appeals: 1973–83 trends. Habeas corpus: Federal review of State prisoner petitions.*

Sentencing practices

States vary in the degree of judicial and parole board discretion in the sentencing and release decisions provided by law. Currently, the range of State sentencing systems involves the following:

Indeterminate sentencing. The judge has primary control over the type of sentence given (such as prison, probation, or fine and the upper and lower bounds of the length of prison sentences within statutory limits), but actual time served is determined by the parole board.

Determinate sentencing. The judge sets the type of sentence and the length of prison sentences within statutory limits, but the parole board may not release prisoners before their sentences (minus good-time) have expired.

Mandatory prison terms. Legislation requires the imposition of a prison sentence, often of specified length, for certain crimes and/or certain categories of offenders.

Presumptive sentencing. The judge is required to impose a sentence whose length is set by law for each offense or class of offense. When there are mitigating or aggravating circumstances, however, the judge is allowed to shorten or lengthen the sentence within specified boundaries.

Some States have other practices that affect sentencing and the actual time served:

Sentencing guidelines. The courts set sentences by using procedures designed to structure sentencing decisions, usually based on offense severity and criminal history.

Parole guidelines. Parole boards use procedures designed to structure release decisions based on measurable offender criteria.

Good-time policies. In nearly all the States legislation allows for reduction of a prison term based on the offender's behavior in prison.

Emergency crowding provisions. Policies that relieve prison crowding by systematically making certain inmates eligible for early release.

In recent years many States have been moving away from sentencing systems that allow judges and parole boards wide discretion in sentences and time served to more certain and fixed punishments for crimes through mandatory sentences, sentences of fixed length (determinate sentencing), and the abolition of parole boards.

Evidence of this shift in sentencing and release policy can be seen in the percentage of offenders leaving State prisons because of a parole board decision:

- In 1977, nearly 72% of those discharged from prison exited as a result of a parole board decision.
- In 1985, by contrast, 43% of those released were by a parole board's decision.
- Increasingly, States have come to rely on mandatory release (sentence length minus good-time earned while in prison) to fix release dates rather than parole boards.

Sentence length varies by whether the system is determinate or indeterminate. Of 28 jurisdictions studied in 1985—

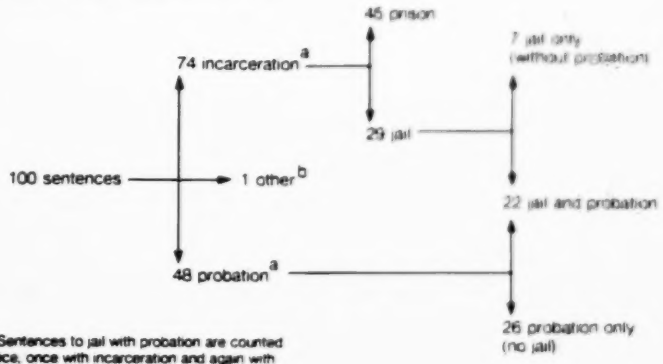
- the average (mean) prison term imposed in determinate sentencing jurisdictions was 40% to 50% lower than those found for indeterminate sentencing jurisdictions
- there was a narrower range in sentences imposed for each of the selected crime categories studied in the determinate sentencing jurisdictions than in the indeterminate sentencing jurisdictions.

Mandatory sentencing also has gained wide acceptance as legislatures in almost all States have defined specific offenses or offender types for which imprisonment sentences must be given (probation is not an option):

- These offenses generally focus on specific violent crimes, offenses involving the use of weapons, or drug crimes.
- Repeat offenders also have been targeted by many States with mandatory enhancements given for a prior felony conviction or the inclusion of new offense categories for repeat offenders in State criminal codes.

Sources: Setting prison terms. Sentencing practices in 13 States. Felony sentencing in 18 local jurisdictions. Prison admissions and releases, 1983. Sentencing outcomes in 28 felony courts. Probation and parole 1986.

A typical 100 sentences in felony court in 28 local jurisdictions, 1985



[a] Sentences to jail with probation are counted twice, once with incarceration and again with probation. For this reason, the sum of incarceration, probation, and other exceeds 100.
[b] Other includes such sentences as restitution to the victim or a fine.

Sentencing outcomes

Felons convicted of more serious offenses are more likely to go to State prison.

Percent of convicted felons sent to prison in 28 local jurisdictions, 1985

Homicide	84%
Rape	65
Robbery	67
Burglary	49
Aggravated assault	42
Larceny	32
Drug trafficking	27

Straight probation accounted for more than a fourth of felony sentences in the 28 jurisdictions studied. About another fifth of such sentences were to a term in a local jail (usually 1 year or less) followed by probation.

Subclassifications of general crime categories revealed substantial differences in imprisonment rates and average prison terms. For example, 56% of those persons convicted of residential burglary were sentenced to prison for an average term of 67 months, while only 47% of those persons convicted of nonresidential burglary were sentenced to prison for an average term of 46 months.

Of every 10 defendants convicted of a serious felony, 7 were 30 years old or younger.

Of the 2,561 defendants convicted of homicide in 1985 in 28 large court systems throughout the country—

- 84% were sentenced to prison
- 1% were given jail terms
- 7% received combined jail and probation sentences
- 8% were given straight probation.

Felons with multiple conviction charges receive longer sentences:

- 39% of those convicted on a single charge in the 28 jurisdictions received prison sentences, averaging 73 months.
- 80% of those convicted on four or more charges received prison terms averaging 150 months.

Whites and blacks entering State prison in 1983 received the same average sentences if differences in geographical and offense distributions are taken into account:

- A higher proportion of blacks than whites had been convicted of a violent crime, especially robbery.
- Blacks were concentrated in States that gave longer average sentences to all racial groups than were given in other States.

For each of the major violent crimes (except murder), sentences were longer for the men than for the women who entered State prison in 1983. Murder brought a median sentence of life imprisonment for both sexes.

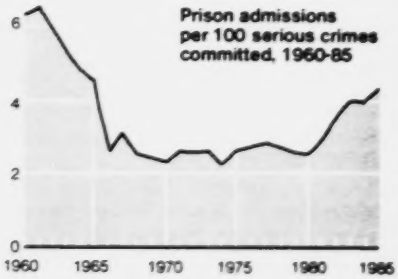
The risk of imprisonment for serious crime has increased in recent years, but it has not yet reached the levels of 20 to 25 years ago.

Of Federal offenders convicted between July 1, 1985, and June 30, 1986—

- 51% were sentenced to prison terms
- 37% were sentenced to probation only
- the remainder received fines or other sentences.

The average prison sentence for offenders receiving regular prison sentences was slightly less than 5 1/2 years.

Between 1979 and 1986 average lengths of regular Federal prison sentences increased by 32%.



Sources: Felony sentencing in 28 local jurisdictions. Prisoners in 1985. Prison admissions and releases, 1983. Sentencing and time served: Federal offenses and offenders.

Prosecution of white-collar offenders

Of those arrested by State or local police for white-collar felonies in eight States and one territory in 1983, 68% were prosecuted—a somewhat higher proportion than those arrested for felonies involving property crimes (66%), violent crimes (62%), or public-order crimes (61%).

Persons prosecuted for the white-collar crimes of forgery/counterfeiting, fraud, and embezzlement had a conviction rate slightly lower (74%) than those arrested for property crimes (76%), but higher than for violent crimes (66%) or public-order crimes (67%). (Public-order offenses include nonviolent sexual offenses, commercialized vice, drug offenses, disorderly conduct, and weapons offenses.)

Persons convicted of white-collar crimes in State and local courts were—

- much less likely to be sentenced to incarceration for more than 1 year (18%) than violent offenders (39%) and property offenders (26%)
- sentenced to incarceration less often than violent offenders and property offenders (60%, 67%, and 65%, respectively) but more often than public-order offenders (55%).

About 30% of suspects investigated by U.S. attorneys in the 12 months prior to September 30, 1985, were suspected of involvement in white-collar offenses; the majority of suspects were investigated for fraud.

Criminal cases were filed by U.S. attorneys against 55% of white-collar suspects—the same filing rate as for non-white-collar offenses. The filing rate for tax fraud was the highest (79%), followed by regulatory offenses (65%).

During 1985, 10,733 defendants were convicted of Federal white-collar crimes, an increase of 18% in the number of white-collar convictions since 1980. The conviction rate for white-collar defendants was 85%, compared to a rate of 78% for all other defendants in Federal criminal cases.

About 40% of white-collar offenders convicted in 1985 were sentenced to incarceration, compared to 54% for non-white-collar offenders.

Those convicted of white-collar crimes received shorter average sentences of incarceration (29 months) than other Federal offenders (50 months).

Those convicted of non-white-collar crimes were more than twice as likely as white-collar offenders to receive a sentence of more than 5 years; white-collar offenders were more likely to be sentenced to probation or fined.

Among white-collar offenders, those convicted of counterfeiting were the most likely to be sentenced to incarceration (59%). They received the longest average sentence (40 months) and were the most likely to be sentenced to more than 5 years.

Sources: Tracking offenders: White-collar crime, White collar crime: Federal offenses and offenders.

Corrections

Few aspects of criminal justice have been the subject of more intense debate over the past several years than that of corrections policy. As the public has demanded stiffer sentences and the effects of demographic changes in the population have increased the size of the more "prison-prone" age groups in society, prisons have filled to over capacity, leading to increased demands on correctional systems.

The BJS corrections statistics program provides systematic data on correctional populations and agency workloads covering probation, local jails, State and Federal prisons, parole, and persons under sentence of death.

In August 1987, the *1984 Census of State adult correctional facilities* was published as the first release of data from that census. The 1984 census was the third in a quinquennial series intended for use by Federal, State, and local correctional administrators in assessing the needs of State correctional facilities. Earlier censuses were conducted in 1974 and 1979.

The August report includes a national overview; a description of facilities and inmates by security level, size, sex of inmates housed, and facility function; and a final section on confinement and community-based facility age, capacity, inmates, court orders, programs, employees, and expenditures by region and State.

Based on the census, BJS published *Population density in State prisons* (BJS Special Report, December 1986). It examines prison housing patterns, population density and occupancy, and the effects of population density on rates of deaths, assaults, and disturbances.

Additional analyses on several topics were performed on data collected during the 1983 quinquennial National Jail Inmate Survey. *Jail inmates, 1985* (BJS Bulletin, August 1987) was published, releasing data from the annual jail sample survey that provides basic counts of jail populations in years when the jail census is not conducted. Analysis was completed of 1986 jail inmate data and released early in fiscal 1988 (*Jail inmates, 1986*, BJS Bulletin, October 1987).

The National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) series, begun in 1926, provides yearend and midyear counts, by jurisdiction, of prisoners confined in State and Federal institutions. *Prisoners in 1986* (BJS Bulletin, May 1987) and a September 1987 press release documented the continued growth in the population of the Nation's prisons. The number of inmates in State and Federal prisons reached a record high of 570,519 by June 30, 1987. Also released during the year was the detailed report, *Prisoners in State and Federal institutions on December 31, 1984* (BJS Final Report, June 1987).

The National Probation Reports series provides annual data, by State, on the number of admissions to probation supervision and the yearend total of persons under such supervision.

57

The Uniform Parole Reports Program, begun in 1965, provides data on the populations and characteristics of persons admitted to and released from parole supervision. This program also gathers information from States annually on legislative and administrative changes likely to affect the length of sentences and the time served in correctional institutions.

In January 1987 the annual *Probation and parole, 1985* (BJS Bulletin) was released, a month earlier than the previous year. Data were analyzed for the 1986 annual report, which was released an additional month earlier in December 1987, further reducing the time between reference date and publication.

The National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) gathers information on the characteristics of offenders admitted to or released from prisons. It has been integrated with Uniform Parole Reports to provide a complete overview of sanctioning across the States—from prison entry through termination of parole for each offender.

In fiscal 1987 data from the NCRP on time served in prison were analyzed. This report, *Time served in prison and on parole 1984* (BJS Special Report, December 1987), is the first providing the total time an offender serves on a court sentence and what proportion of that time is actually spent in confinement.

The corrections statistics program also reports separately on State prisoners sentenced to and awaiting execution. The first release of data for 1985 was made in *Capital punishment, 1985* (BJS Bulletin, November 1986), and the first release of data for 1986 was made in *Capital punishment, 1986* (BJS Bulletin, September 1987).

Children in custody: Public juvenile facilities, 1985 (BJS Bulletin, October 1986) was published during the fiscal year and analysis continued on similar data collected on private facilities. During fiscal 1987 work began on an historical report that provides public and private facility data for the censuses done from 1975 to 1985. The 1985 private facility data will be released in fiscal 1988 as part of this historical document.

Of major importance during fiscal 1987 was the design and conduct of a sample survey of juveniles in long-term public confinement facilities, similar to the Survey of Prison Inmates. Nearly 3,000 juveniles confined in long-term public institutions were surveyed in December 1987 and January and February 1988. Data collected include demographic characteristics, offense for which incarcerated, prior offense history, drug use, and so on. Analysis of the data will begin in fiscal 1988 with publication early in fiscal 1989.

BJS reports on . . .

Data on Federal, State, and local spending for corrections became available during fiscal 1987 in considerably more detail than at any time since 1979. These data show dramatic increases in the level of corrections spending as well as changes in what correctional activities are being funded.

In all, a total of 12 reports were issued under the corrections statistics program in fiscal 1987, including—

- *State and Federal prisoners, 1925–85* (BJS Bulletin, October 1986)
- *Population density in State prisons* (BJS Special Report, December 1986)
- *Imprisonment in four countries* (BJS Special Report, February 1987)
- *Historical corrections statistics in the United States, 1850–1984* (December 1986).

Topical reports planned for fiscal 1988 include—

- driving while intoxicated
- prison inmate characteristics
- criminal careers of jail inmates
- victims of prison inmates
- time served in prison in five countries.

During fiscal 1987 planning commenced for a National Conference on Punishment for Criminal Offenses, held in early fiscal 1988. During the year a national survey on public attitudes about crime and punishment was conducted especially for the conference. The survey covered public attitudes about the severity of crime, the types and lengths of punishment appropriate for various types of crime, and the purposes sought from punishment.

State prisons

At midyear 1984, 903 State-operated correctional facilities housed 395,309 inmates/residents. Of these facilities, 77% were confinement facilities (prisons) housing 97% of the inmates/residents. The remaining 23% were community-based facilities.

Nearly 2 out of 3 confinement facilities housed fewer than 500 inmates, and 1 in 2 community-based facilities housed fewer than 50 residents. About 1 in 9 confinement facilities housed 1,000 or more inmates. The remaining confinement facilities, about 1 in 5, housed between 500 and 999 inmates.

Approximately 92% of all confinement facilities served as general adult population confinement facilities, 18% as reception and diagnostic facilities, and 16% as work release or prerelease facilities. Nearly all the community-based facilities served as work release or prerelease centers.

One in four confinement facilities were a maximum security institution, while virtually all the community-based facilities were minimum security. About half the inmates in confinement facilities were medium custody, 36% were maximum custody, and 14% were minimum custody. Nearly all the residents in community-based facilities were minimum custody.

Most confinement (70%) and community-based (67%) facilities were originally built less than 50 years before the census.

Approximately 1 in 14 confinement facilities and 1 in 50 community-based facilities were 100 years old or older.

On the average, facilities holding only males held twice the number of inmates per facility (568 inmates per facility) as facilities holding only females (275 inmates per facility).

Regardless of facility size, roughly the same percentage of inmates in confinement facilities (between 22% and 26%) were involved in academic programs.

The percentage of inmates in vocational training programs was similar in facilities housing males only (10%), females only (13%), or inmates of both sexes (10%). Similarly, the extent of participation in prison industries varied little among facilities that housed males only (16%), females only (14%), or inmates of both sexes (19%).

Between July 1, 1983, and June 30, 1984, 753 deaths occurred in State correctional facilities. About 2 out of 3 of these deaths were from illness or natural causes. Fifty deaths were attributed to AIDS.

On June 30, 1984, correctional employees numbered nearly 145,000. Almost 95,000 of these employees performed custody/security functions. Staff were predominantly male in both confinement facilities (8 in 10) and community-based facilities (7 in 10). However, in facilities housing women only, more than two-thirds of the staff were female.

Among full-time payroll employees there were 4.1 inmates per custody/security employee in confinement facilities and 6.3 inmates per custody/security employee in community-based facilities.

Annual operating expenditures averaged $11,302 per inmate in confinement facilities and $7,951 per resident in community-based facilities. These expenditures were lowest in the South and highest in the Northeast for both types of facilities.

Source: *1984 Census of State adult correctional facilities.*

Adult correctional populations

An estimated 3.2 million adult men and women were under some form of correctional supervision at the end of 1986—equivalent to 1 in 55 U.S. residents 18 years old or older.

This total adult correctional population is a 7% increase over 1985 and a 30% increase since 1983.

From 1983 through 1986 the number of men and women under community supervision increased faster than did the number of incarcerated adults. Parolees increased by 33%, probationers by 32%, prisoners by 25%, and people in jail by 23%.

During the past decade the percentage of offenders who left prison as a result of a parole board's discretionary decision declined from almost 72% of persons released to 43% of those released. This is the result of an increased use of determinate sentencing in which each prisoner serves the full sentence the court hands down minus credits earned for good behavior or meritorious conduct. The Federal Government recently converted to this type of system.

Of the 3.2 million adults under the care or custody of a correctional agency at the end of 1986, 3 out of 4 were being supervised in the community:

Total	3,240,552	100.0%
Probation	2,094,405	64.6
Parole	326,752	10.1
Prison	546,659	16.9
Jail	272,736	8.4

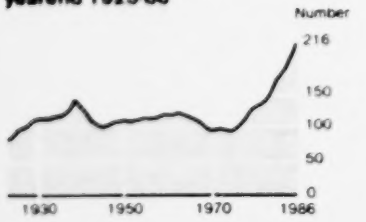
During the first 6 months of 1987, the Nation's Federal and State correctional population grew by 5%, representing a continuing space demand of about 1,000 new prison beds every week.

The average annual growth rate for the prison population during 1925–85 was 2.8%; for the residential population of the United States it was 1.2%. The more rapid growth of the prison population is also reflected in the incarceration rate (the number of sentenced prisoners for each 100,000 residents in the United States), which rose from 79 per 100,000 to 201 per 100,000 from 1925 to 1985.

As of June 30, 1987, 5% of all prison inmates were women, the highest percentage since recordkeeping began in 1926. During the first half of 1987 the female prison inmate population grew by 6.2%, compared to 4.6% for males. Since 1980 the number of female inmates increased from 13,420 to 28,314, which is an 111% increase. The number of male inmates went from 316,401 to 542,205, which is a 71% increase.

Number of sentenced State and Federal prisoners, yearend 1925-86

Number of sentenced State and Federal prisoners per 100,000 U.S. population, yearend 1925-86



Note: Prior to 1977, prisoner reports were based on the custody population. Beginning in 1977, focus is on the jurisdiction population.

The jail population on June 30, 1986, was 274,444, up an estimated 7% from 256,615 the preceding year. The number of juveniles in jails was 1,708, an increase of 5% from the same date the year before.

Because of their dual functions of pretrial detention and postconviction confinement, jails have a higher volume of admissions and releases than other correctional facilities. During the year ending June 30, 1986, more than 16 million admission and release transactions occurred in the Nation's jails.

Sources: *Prisoners in 1986, Probation and parole 1986, The 1983 jail census, State and Federal prisoners, 1925–85, Jail inmates, 1985, Jail inmates, 1986*, BJS press release, September 6, 1987.

Juveniles in custody

On February 1, 1985, 49,322 juveniles were being held in 1,040 public detention, correctional, and shelter facilities; this was a 1% increase in the number held on the same date in 1983. Another 34,000 juveniles were housed in some 2,000 private facilities in 1985.

In 1984, 521,607 juveniles were admitted to public facilities and 515,301 were discharged.

Of those in public facilities—
- about 93% were accused of or were found to have committed acts that would have been criminal offenses if committed by adults
- about 18% were being held for murder, rape, robbery, or aggravated assault
- 5% of the juveniles in custody were status offenders, such as truants, runaways, or curfew violators.

About 18% of the public facilities (which held about 45% of the juveniles in public custody) held more residents than they were designed for.

At the time of the juvenile facility census, 86% of the juveniles were male, 61% white, 37% black, and 2% other races. About 82% of the juveniles were between 14 and 17 years old.

Nationally, 185 juveniles per 100,000 juvenile population were in custody. This is 5% higher than in 1983. The West had the highest confinement rate, 327 juveniles per 100,000 juvenile population, followed by the Midwest with 166, the South with 162, and the Northeast with 99.

The average cost of housing a resident for 1 year in a public juvenile facility was—
- $25,200 nationally
- $39,900 in the Northeast
- $26,100 in the Midwest
- $22,900 in the West
- $22,700 in the South.

Source: *Children in custody: Public juvenile facilities, 1985*

International incarceration rates

The United States, Canada, and England have similar rates of imprisonment for adults arrested for robbery. In these three countries an estimated 48% to 52% of those arrested for robbery eventually serve a sentence of incarceration in a jail or prison.

For the crime of theft, imprisonment rates range from 14% in Canada and England to 18% in the United States. For burglary Canada has the lowest measured rate (23%), followed by England (30%) and the United States (35%).*

These percentages somewhat understate the actual likelihood of being sentenced to prison or jail in Canada and England because it is not possible to measure the number of people in these countries who are arrested for one crime but are incarcerated for a lesser crime. Such charge reductions often result from plea bargaining.

If the three countries are compared with no charge reduction corrections, the United States has the lowest imprisonment rate for robbery, a rate for burglary between that for Canada and England, and an imprisonment rate for theft within 3 percentage points of those for the other two countries.

It appears that the criminal justice system in the Federal Republic of Germany relies less on incarceration for theft—it imprisons an estimated 4% to 9% of those arrested—than do the systems in the other countries.

Source: *Imprisonment in four countries.*

*All data on England reported here include Wales but not Scotland, because England and Wales have a common criminal justice system.

Prison and jail crowding

State prisons added an estimated 165,000 new beds between 1978 and 1985. Yet crowding remains a serious problem.

- The Nation's prisons are operating at between 6% and 21% above capacity.
- Most State prison systems, as well as the Federal system, are filled beyond capacity.
- 19 States reported 18,617 early releases in 1985 because of crowding.
- 19 States said that 10,143 prisoners were backed up in local jails because their prisons do not have room.

At yearend 1984 six States and the District of Columbia were operating their entire prison system under a court order or consent decree concerning crowding and other conditions, as was Michigan's system for male offenders. In 25 other States at least one major prison was under a court order or a consent decree.

During 1984 the prison population in States entirely under court order increased 2.1%, compared to an increase of 9.1% in States without court intervention.

Total inmate living space in State prisons throughout the country grew by 29% between 1979 and 1984. During the same period the number of prisoners grew 45%, resulting in an 11% decline in the average amount of living space per inmate.

There is little evidence that prison population density levels were directly associated with elevated death rates, inmate-on-inmate assaults, or other disturbances. Such events occurred more frequently in maximum security facilities, irrespective of their population densities.

At the end of 1986, 17 States reported holding 13,770 State prisoners in local jails because their prisons were crowded. Taken as a whole, State prisons are estimated to be operating at between 106% and 124% of their capacities. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons is at 127% to 159% of capacity.

Nearly three-fourths of the Nation's jail population in 1986 were housed in the jails of 361 jurisdictions, each with an average daily population of at least 100 inmates.

About 26% of these jails held inmates for State, Federal, or other local authorities because of crowding elsewhere, compared to 22% in 1985 and 21% in 1983.

Overall it is estimated that the Nation's jails were operating at 96% of rated capacity in 1986.

Occupancy exceeded rated capacity in jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations by 2% in 1984, by 6% in 1985, and by 8% in 1986. In 1986, 23% of the jails in these jurisdictions were under court order to reduce the number of inmates they housed.

Among those jails under court order to improve one or more conditions, 86% were cited for crowded living units, 51% for inadequate recreation facilities, and 41% for medical facilities/services.

About 1 in 5 jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations reported that they were under court order both to reduce population and to improve one or more conditions of confinement.

About 23% of the jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations reported inmate deaths in 1986, down from 27% in 1985.

The most common cause of death in jails in the year preceding June 30, 1986, was natural causes. Of the 277 inmate deaths in 1986, 52% were by natural causes, another 39% were suicides, 5% were by accidents from undetermined causes, and 4% were from injuries caused by another person.

Sources: Prisoners in 1986. Population density in State prisons. Jail inmates, 1986. Prisoners in 1984.

Characteristics of prison and jail inmates

In 1985 about 5% of the Nation's Federal and State prisoners were women.

Violent crimes were much more common among men than among women. More than 40% of the women entering prison in 1983 had been convicted of larceny, forgery, or fraud, compared to 15% of the men.

Prisoners entering 30 State prison systems in 1983 were convicted of the following offenses:

Burglary	26.3%
Robbery	14.3
Larceny	11.3
Drug crimes	8.3
Public-order crimes	7.6
Assault	7.0
Forgery or fraud	5.7
Murder	3.8
Sexual assault other than rape	2.6
Rape	2.4
Motor vehicle theft	2.2
Manslaughter	1.9
Stolen property	1.4
Other crimes	1.3
Other violent crimes	1.2
Kidnaping	1.0
Other property crimes	1.0
Arson	0.7

Of persons entering prison in 1983—

- just over a third had been convicted of a violent crime (with robbery the most common violent offense)
- almost half did so for a property offense
- about a sixth had committed drug offenses or public-order offenses (such as weapons violations, drunk driving, commercialized vice, or morals offenses).

Of State prison inmates in 1986—
- 67% were convicted violent offenders (either the current offense or a previous conviction)
- 95% were convicted violent offenders or previously had been convicted of a crime.

Of persons admitted to State prison in 1983—
- about 54% were white
- 45% were black
- less than 1% were of other races, primarily Native Americans and Asian Americans.

Women prison inmates numbered 26,610 among the Nation's prisoners at yearend 1986, increasing at a faster rate during the year (15.1%) than males (8.3%). The rate of incarceration for sentenced males (423 per 100,000 males in the resident population), however, was about 21 times higher than for sentenced females.

In 1986 whites accounted for an estimated 58% of the jail population, blacks 41%, and other races (Native Americans, Aleuts, Asians, and Pacific Islanders) about 1%.

Among local jail inmates in 1986, 53% were awaiting trial or on trial and the rest were convicted offenders who will either serve their sentence in jail (usually for less than 1 year) or will be transferred to a State prison.

The median age of jail inmates in 1983 was 27 years. Other demographic characteristics of jail inmates were:
- 79% were unmarried
- 59% had not completed high school
- 93% were male, 7% female
- 58% were white, 39% black, 3% other races.

The median income among the jail inmates who had been free for the year before their arrest was $5,486. Of those in jail—
- 41% had a full-time job at the time they were arrested
- 12% had been working part time
- 47% were unemployed.

Unconvicted offenders held in local jails were charged with these offenses:

Burglary	16%
Robbery	14
Public-order offenses	13
Murder/attempted murder	10
Assault	9
Larceny	9
Drug offenses	8
Fraud/forgery/embezzlement	6
Rape/sexual assault	4
Other property	3
Other violent crimes	3

Of all inmates under sentence in a local jail, 10% were confined for drunk driving.

The most common offense of jail inmates 45 years old or older was driving under the influence (20% of the inmates in that age group).

Almost 9 out of 10 unconvicted jail inmates had had bail set for them. Those who had not had bail set were mainly probationers or parolees whose release had been revoked or persons charged with offenses (such as first-degree murder) for which bail may not be set in certain jurisdictions.

Sources: *Prisoners in 1986. Prison admissions and releases, 1983. Jail inmates, 1983. Jail inmates, 1986.*

Corrections funding

The Nation spent $13 billion on all forms of Federal, State, and local corrections during fiscal 1985. Such activities included building and operating jails and prisons as well as administering probation and parole programs.

This $13 billion represents less than one penny of every dollar spent by Federal, State, and local governments.

State and local governments bear the greatest burden of correctional expenses. They devoted an average of 1.9% of their spending to corrections in 1985.

State governments devoted 3% of their total expenditures to corrections, mostly to operate, maintain, or build prisons or other correctional facilities. Counties spent 4% on corrections, mostly on jails.

For all governments combined, corrections expenditures increased at a greater rate (116%) than other justice activities from 1979 to 1985. For State governments the increase was 129%, for the Federal Government 100%, and for local governments 97%.

Data are available on the construction of State prisons beginning in 1977. Since that time State governments increased the percent of total corrections direct expenditure for prison construction from a low of 7.7% in 1977 to 11.2% in 1985.

Also beginning in 1977, data became available on all expenditures for correctional institutions versus probation, parole, and pardon programs. From 1977 through 1985 State and local governments changed the distribution of their corrections spending (including capital and operating costs) between institutions on the one hand and probation, parole, and pardon on the other. Between 1977 and 1985—

- State governments increased the proportion of their direct corrections spending for institutions from 76.3% to 83.9%, while the percent for probation, parole, and pardon decreased from 12.8% to 9.6%.
- County governments increased their percent for institutions from 70.1% to 79.8%, decreasing the percent for probation, parole, and pardon from 27.6% to 20.2%.
- Municipalities increased their percent for institutions from 76% to 91.9%, decreasing the percent for probation, parole, and pardon from 17.3% to 8.1%.
- Similar data for the Federal Government are available only for 1985; in that year Federal institutions accounted for 75.8% of Federal direct corrections expenditure; probation, parole, and pardon accounted for 16.2%.

Source: *Justice expenditure and employment, 1985.*

Time served in prison

Typically, only a portion of the sentence handed down by the court is actually served in prison.

In 1984 the median sentence served by those released from State prison was 17 months (including prior jail credits), or 45.4% of their original court-ordered sentence.

Median time served by conviction offense of those released from State prison in 1984

Offense	Time in confinement	
	Months*	Percent
All	17	45.4%
Violent	28	50.5
Murder	78	42.2
Manslaughter	32	50.2
Rape	44	50.7
Other sexual assault	26	43.6
Robbery	30	52.4
Assault	22	51.4
Kidnaping	31	51.8
Other violent crimes	16	46.7
Property offenses	15	44.0
Burglary	17	44.2
Arson	19	39.7
Motor vehicle theft	14	55.3
Fraud	13	42.5
Larceny/theft	12	43.4
Stolen property	13	41.5
Other property	12	46.8
Drug offenses	14	38.8
Possession	12	39.2
Trafficking	16	38.7
Other drug	13	38.7
Public-order offenses	9	39.5
Weapons	15	48.9
Other public-order offenses	7	35.7
Other offenses	15	50.6

*Includes prior jail credits.

Violent offenders with a history of felony incarcerations served about 6 months longer in prison than those with no such history; property offenders, about 3 months longer than those with no such history; drug offenders, 1 month longer than those with no such history.

The median time served for all first releases in 1984 was 2 months less than for those released in 1983. This decrease in time served may be partially attributable to the lower percentage of violent offenders released in 1984 and to changes in the composition of States reporting to the program.

On average, offenders had served 45.4% of the maximum length of their court-ordered prison sentences. Violent offenders on average served the highest percentage of their maximum sentences, followed by property offenders, public-order offenders, and drug offenders. Murderers received the longest sentences to prison, and they served the longest amount of time.

Black offenders released from prison in 1984 served a median of 18 months in prison. The median was 1 month longer than for whites. This racial difference largely is attributable to the higher percentage of blacks imprisoned for violent offenses.

Average time served by Federal prisoners[a]

Offense	Mean time served	Percent of sentence served
All	43.3 months	59.1%
Robbery	72.9	49.0
Drugs	38.5	58.6
Weapons	31.5	69.4
Monetary crime[b]	26.5	63.8

[a]Federal prison inmates who were sentenced to more than 1 year in prison, who had their first parole hearing during the year prior to June 30, 1980, and who were released or scheduled for release as of January 1, 1987.
[b]Monetary crime includes counterfeiting, forgery, fraud, mail theft, embezzlement, interstate transportation of stolen securities, and receiving stolen property with intent to sell; it excludes burglary and robbery.

Sources: *Sentencing and time served: Federal offenses and offenders. Time served in prison and on parole, 1984.*

Capital punishment

At yearend 1986, 1,781 persons were under a sentence of death in State prisons. Of these—

- all but one had been convicted of murder
- one had been convicted of capital rape of a child
- 99% were males
- 57% were white
- the median age was nearly 32
- two-thirds had prior felony convictions
- more than 1 in 10 had a prior homicide conviction
- a fifth were on parole at the time of their capital offense
- nearly another fifth had pending charges, were on probation, or were prison inmates or escapees when they committed their capital offense
- excluding those with pending charges, a third of those awaiting execution were under sentence for another crime when the capital offense was committed.

Criminal history profile of prisoners under sentence of death, yearend 1986

	Number	Percent*
Persons under sentence of death	1,781	100.0%
Prior felony conviction		
With	1,085	65.8
Without	565	34.2
Not reported	131	
Prior homicide conviction		
With	128	8.6
Without	1,353	91.4
Not reported	300	
Legal status at time of capital offense		
Charges pending	91	6.1
Probation	85	5.7
Parole	304	20.5
Prison escapee	33	2.2
Prison inmate	49	3.3
Other status	20	1.3
None	901	60.8
Not reported	298	

*Percents are based on those offenders for whom data were reported.

At yearend 1986—

- laws in 37 States authorized the death penalty
- 32 States held prisoners under sentence of death
- 7 States had conducted a total of 18 executions during that year.

Lethal injection (17 States) and electrocution (15 States) were the most common methods of execution permitted by State law. Lethal gas was permitted in 8 States, hanging in 4 States, and a firing squad in 2 States.

Nine States provided for more than one method of execution—lethal injection or an alternative method—generally at the election of the condemned prisoner.

71

About 2.4% of the people who have been on death row in State prison between 1977 and 1986 have been executed.

The number of people the States have put to death a year has been as follows:

1976	0
1977	1
1978	0
1979	2
1980	0
1981	1
1982	2
1983	5
1984	21
1985	18
1986	18

In 1986—

- 297 people were added to State death rows
- 64 people had their death sentences vacated or commuted
- 9 died while awaiting execution
- 18 offenders (11 white males and 7 black males) were executed in 7 States (10 in Texas, 3 in Florida, and 1 each in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia).

The 18 persons executed in 1986 brought the total to 68 persons executed since 1976, when the Supreme Court affirmed the death penalty.

The oldest person on death row was 75 years old; the youngest was 17. There were 14 States that do not specify in their laws the minimum age at which a capital sentence may be imposed. The age most frequently set by statute is 18 years old (9 States).

Source: *Capital punishment, 1986.*

72

Recidivism and career criminals

Few issues in criminal justice have drawn as much attention as the impact of recidivism on public safety and the implications of recidivism for sentencing policy. Recidivism generally may be defined by rearrest, reconviction, or reincarceration. Career criminal programs and mandatory or enhanced sentences for repeat offenders are examples of policies that aim to reduce the threat recidivists pose to society.

With the help and encouragement of State departments of correction and law enforcement and of the FBI Identification Division, a program has been designed to link BJS correctional data with State and FBI criminal-history information. This National Recidivism Data Base enables BJS, for the first time, to derive representative samples of persons released from State prisons, follow this group for several years, and produce estimates on the incidence, prevalence, and seriousness of later arrests and dispositions.

The prison release and criminal history data provide an opportunity to examine the relationship between such factors as age, sentence length, time served, and prior felony-incarceration history on the one hand and postrelease performance on the other.

Major objectives of this effort are to—

- develop for each participating State a report that describes recidivism experiences in that State
- track a national cohort of offenders longitudinally
- assist in validating prediction and classification models used by corrections and parole authorities.

During fiscal 1987 work continued on matching records, data analysis began, and the first release of these data was made (*Recidivism of young parolees*, BJS Special Report, May 1987). The report analyzed local arrest records kept by the FBI of a representative sample of almost 4,000 of the 11,347 persons from 17 to 22 years old who were paroled from prisons in 22 States during 1978 and examined their postprison rearrest experience.

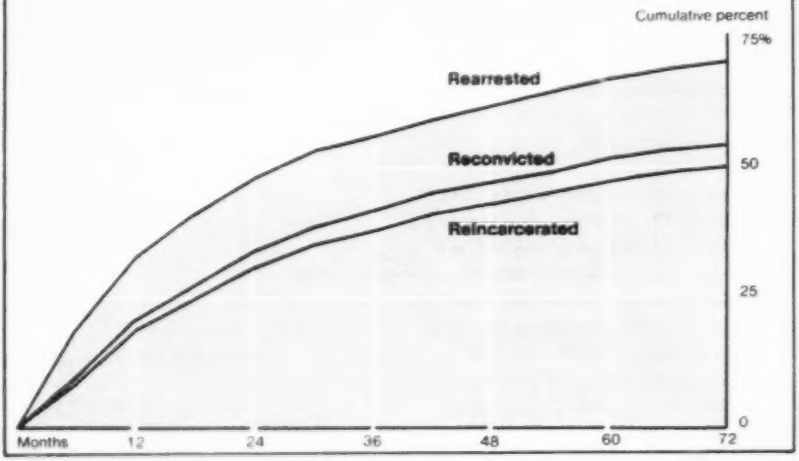
During fiscal 1987, BJS released a report presenting data on the outcomes of Federal offenders placed on probation and parole between July 1, 1985, and June 30, 1986, in *Sentencing and time served: Federal offenses and offenders* (BJS Special Report, June 1987).

During the previous fiscal year BJS released two reports presenting findings relevant to the contemporary debate on recidivism:

- *Jail inmates, 1983* (BJS Bulletin, November 1985) was based on a sample survey of jail inmates that collected detailed data on their demographic characteristics, current offense, and prior criminal records.
- *Prison admissions and releases, 1983* (BJS Special Report, March 1986) contains data for 30 States participating in the National Corrections Reporting Program. These States reported on 144,804 persons entering prison in 1983 and 135,179 released from prison in that year. These prisoners represented more than three-fifths of the Nation's total State prison admissions and releases in 1983. Topics covered include previous criminal history.

During fiscal 1988 work will continue on building the National Recidivism Data Base. A report on recidivism in 11 States is planned for the fall of 1988. Also during fiscal 1988 data will be released on State prison inmates' criminal histories.

Cumulative percent of young adults paroled in 1978 from prisons in 22 States who were rearrested, reconvicted, and reincarcerated, by 6-month intervals.



Young parolees

Almost 70% of the young adults who had been paroled from prisons in 22 States during 1978 were rearrested for serious crimes one or more times within 6 years. About 10% of the paroled offenders accounted for 40% of the new criminal charges.

About 53% of all the parolees were convicted of a serious new offense, and 49% were sent back to prison. Those paroled from prison for a property crime were as likely as were those paroled for a violent crime to be rearrested for a violent crime.

Recidivism rates were highest during the first 2 years following release. Within 1 year, 32% were rearrested. Within 2 years, 47% were rearrested.

Recidivism was higher among young men, blacks, and offenders who had not completed high school than it was among young women, whites, and high school graduates.

These young parolees are estimated to have been rearrested for more than 36,000 new felonies or serious misdemeanors, including about 6,700 violent crimes. The violent crimes included an estimated 324 murders, 231 rapes, 2,291 robberies, and 3,053 assaults.

Of all those parolees rearrested during the 6-year period, half were rearrested within 14 months of leaving prison.

Parolees were frequently rearrested for crimes in States other than the paroling State. About a fifth of the postrelease arrests were in such States.

Almost three-quarters of those paroled for property offenses were rearrested for serious crimes, compared to about two-thirds of those paroled for violent offenses.

Longer prior arrest records were strongly related to high recidivism rates—more than 90% of the parolees with six or more previous adult arrests were rearrested, compared to 59% of the first-time offenders.

The earlier the parolee's first adult arrest, the more likely the chances for rearrest—79% of those arrested and charged as adults before the age of 17 years were rearrested, compared to 51% of those first arrested at 20 years old or older.

The length of time that a parolee had served in prison had no consistent impact on recidivism rates.

An estimated 37% of the parolees were rearrested while still on parole.

Source: *Recidivism of young parolees.*

Federal probationers and parolees

Overall, of more than 24,000 Federal offenders leaving probation and parole between July 1, 1985, and June 30, 1986, more than 1 in 5 had committed a new crime or violated the technical conditions for release; 62% of those on parole and 83% of those on probation completed their full parole or probation terms.

Revocation of Federal parole and probation for a new crime or technical violation was more likely for males, blacks, less-educated offenders, offenders with prior criminal records, and offenders convicted of robbery or forgery.

Federal parole offenders who had previously served either a prison or jail term were about three times as likely to have parole revoked as offenders with no prior convictions.

Source: *Sentencing and time served: Federal offenses and offenders.*

Criminal histories of prison and jail inmates

At least 80% of the men and women held in local jails in 1983 had a prior criminal conviction. About two-thirds had served time before in a jail or prison, and about a third had served a prior sentence at least twice.

More than 40% of the 1983 jail population were people who at the time of their arrest had been on probation, parole, bail or other pretrial release, or had been fugitives from justice.

Almost a fifth of those admitted to State prison in 1983 were parole violators. About a third of those leaving prison in 1983 had previously served time in prison for a felony. Males were more likely than females to have a prior incarceration history for a felony.

Prisoners released in 1983 who had served time for a past felony had received sentences an average of 7 months longer (or 12% more) than those with no prison history. This varied by offense type:

- 17 months longer for current violent offenses
- 6 months longer for current property offenses
- 11 months longer for current drug offenses.

Of persons entering a State prison in 1979—

- almost 84% had a record of prior convictions, including 61% who had previously been incarcerated as an adult, a juvenile, or both
- about 28% had five or more prior convictions for criminal offenses
- at the time of their admission 40% were on parole or probation for prior offenses
- about 28% would still have been incarcerated for earlier crimes if they had served the maximum term imposed by the court on their prior sentence to confinement.

Recidivists entering prison for robbery, burglary, or auto theft returned to prison sooner than those who entered for other crimes.

The greater the amount of time a former prisoner remains in the community without reincarceration beyond the first year, the less is the likelihood that he or she will return to prison.

Sources: *Jail inmates, 1983. Prison admissions and releases, 1983. Examining recidivism.*

Privacy, security, and confidentiality of criminal justice data

The increased reliance on criminal justice data for public and private sector uses has highlighted the need for accurate, complete, and timely criminal justice records. Policies that govern the collection and maintenance of such data and legislation that regulates the release of such data for different purposes are also of prime concern to the criminal justice community. In response to these concerns, a major part of BJS activity during the year in the area of privacy, security, and confidentiality focused on the issue of data quality.

During fiscal 1987 BJS released proceedings of a major national conference on the quality of criminal justice records. (*Data quality policies and procedures*, November 1986). The proceedings include papers by then Deputy Attorney General D. Lowell Jensen, then Assistant Attorney General Lois H. Herrington, BJS Director Steven R. Schlesinger, and Congressman Charles E. Schumer (10th District, New York). The proceedings explore many aspects of data quality policy, legislation, and implementation techniques.

In recognition of the key role that courts play in the development of complete criminal-history records, a special effort has been made to ensure higher levels of court disposition reporting. Specifically, during fiscal 1987 discussions were initiated with national court organizations to explore further the legal, technical, and policy issues relating to disposition reporting.

In addition, BJS funded efforts to review the basic policies and assumptions underlying DOJ Privacy and Security Regulations (28 CFR Part 20), which implement the "privacy and security requirements" as set out in Section 812 of the Omnibus Crime Control Act, as amended. Recommended revisions to basic policies reflected in the regulations were also completed.

Another document in the Information Policy series, *Criminal justice "hot" files*, was released in January 1987. It is an extensive review of the policies and procedures affecting maintenance and dissemination of files on wanted persons and stolen property. The report also contains specific descriptions of Federal procedures for accessing FBI "hot" files.

In recognition of the impact that automated fingerprint identification systems will have on the accuracy of record checks, a study was conducted to determine the current status of such systems and to analyze the policy implications associated with increased use of automated fingerprint checks. A report on the topic was released in May of 1987, *Automated fingerprint identification systems: Technology and policy issues*.

The results of a 1984 survey of State criminal justice record repositories were presented in *State criminal records repositories* (BJS Technical Report, October 1985). This survey provided the first composite picture of the number of subject records in State repositories, the number of arrests and final dispositions reported each year, the extent of automation of repository data, the legal requirements imposed on law enforcement agencies for disposition reporting, and the production of statistical reports by the repositories. The report served as the basis for public presentations during fiscal 1987.

A major report in the Criminal Justice Information Policy series, *Data quality of criminal justice records*, was issued in fiscal 1986. The report describes statutory and common law requirements for data accuracy and discusses sanctions for failure to maintain data standards. Key issues relating to Federal and State data quality policies are also highlighted.

BJS continued to oversee activities to ensure the confidentiality of statistical and research data. These activities included the development and review of appropriate data maintenance and transfer procedures in support of the BJS Federal, State, and national programs.

Criminal justice "hot" files

The computerized files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) held almost 8 million records of wanted or missing persons and stolen property as of August 1986.

Among law enforcement officials, these files are commonly called "hot files," and the information in them is perhaps the most heavily used type of criminal justice information.

As of September 1985 law enforcement officers in the United States and Canada were querying the NCIC system more than 400,000 times a day—54% were about wanted or missing persons and 42% were about stolen vehicles or license plates.

On August 1, 1986, the hot files included records concerning—

- more than 2.1 million stolen securities
- 2 million stolen or recovered guns
- 1.4 million stolen articles
- 1.2 million stolen vehicles
- 616,000 stolen license plates
- 249,000 wanted persons
- 53,000 missing persons (mostly juveniles)
- 26,000 stolen boats
- 1,300 unidentified persons
- 253 Canadian warrants

NCIC operates from the FBI's Washington, D.C., headquarters and responds to information requests 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It has connecting terminals throughout the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in police departments, sheriffs' offices, State police facilities, Federal law enforcement agencies, and other criminal justice agencies. Police officers in the field can use mobile terminals to obtain immediate access.

The wanted-person files contain identifying information on people for whom there are outstanding Federal warrants or State warrants for felonies or serious misdemeanors. These include parole and probation violators and juveniles who will be tried as adults. Wanted persons who are armed and dangerous are identified as such.

Source: *Criminal justice "hot" files.*

Quality of criminal history data

By 1984, all 50 States had enacted laws to ensure some aspect of data quality.

Most State legislation (36 States) was enacted after promulgation of DOJ Privacy and Security Regulations (28 CFR Part 20) in 1975.

The statutes of almost all States (44) require that State and local law enforcement agencies report arrests for serious crimes to the central repository.

A lesser number of States require that case disposition data be reported to the central repository.

Disposition data are required to be reported—

- by courts (24 States)
- correctional agencies (31 States)
- prosecutors (23 States).

Many disposition reporting requirements are generally worded and therefore are difficult to enforce.

Criminal-history records are the most frequently used records in criminal justice.

Despite increasing awareness of data quality, States vary substantially in the quality of data. All States have some legislative requirements regarding data, but standards and sanctions are frequently unrealistic and therefore unworkable.

In 1984, 44 responding States reported having about 35 million subject records. (A subject record is a record pertaining to a specific person who has entered the criminal justice system. An individual can have more than one subject record.)

Close to 4 million arrests were reported to 39 State repositories in 1983. Almost 2 million final dispositions were reported to the 30 States reporting such data.

Thirty-five States had at least some automated criminal-history information, and steady gains are being made in increased automation of criminal records.

Sources: *Compendium of State privacy and security legislation, 1984 edition: Overview. Crime control and criminal records. State criminal records repositories.*

Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems (AFIS)

Recent advances in fingerprint detection and in automated fingerprint matching are substantially increasing police efficiency and effectiveness. Many large police departments have begun using computers to analyze and classify fingerprints automatically and then match them against large files of known prints. In addition, new laser and chemical techniques are lifting prints off diverse materials and developing them so they can be read by the new computer systems.

The fingerprint enhancement and identification technologies greatly increase the ease with which fingerprints can be processed and improve the accuracy of criminal justice records and statistics:

- An Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) identified 525 men and women arrested in Baltimore who were using aliases during the system's first few months of operation in that city.
- San Francisco's AFIS operations conducted 5,514 searches of prints found at crime scenes (latent prints), made 1,001 identifications, and helped to clear 816 cases, including 52 homicides during its first year. That compared to 58 latent print cases San Francisco cleared the previous year using a manual system.
- The first latent print that was checked against the San Francisco Police Department's automated data base had been left in the home of a murder victim in 1978. Police investigators had spent thousands of hours searching for the print manually for 8 years, but with no suspect and no other clues there was no way to link the latent print with the huge file by conventional means. However, when the San Francisco AFIS operations started during 1985, it matched the print in 6 minutes, and the alleged murderer was in police custody the same day.

The AFIS computers scan fingerprints and automatically extract identifying characteristics. These are then translated into binary numbers, which the machine compares to similar numbers in its files of thousands or even millions of other prints. The computers can process about 500 or 600 print numbers a second.

File prints found to closely match the unknown print being studied are verified by a technician for final identification. The newest systems can also display a copy of the file print and other identifying data.

About 35% of all crime scenes yield usable latent prints. Superglue and lasers are making it easier to get prints that can be lifted from objects. The Federal Bureau of Investigation used a laser to detect the fingerprint of a Nazi war criminal on a 40-year-old postcard. Superglue was used to develop a print on a pillow case at the scene of a rape.

As of the latter part of 1986, Alaska, California, and Minnesota had AFIS systems in operation on the State level. Colorado, Indiana, Illinois, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Tennessee have purchased them or are negotiating to buy such systems.

As of May 1987, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Washington have begun procurement. Arizona, Pennsylvania, and New York plan to do so soon. Maryland, Michigan, and Wisconsin are considering doing the same within the next few years.

Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming are talking about establishing a joint regional operation. Massachusetts officials are discussing sharing their system with the other New England States.

The cities with operating AFIS systems as of 1986 are Baltimore, Houston, Kansas City, Miami, San Jose, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. At that time systems were being installed in Chicago, Las Vegas, and Tacoma. Austin, Denver, Jacksonville, and Seattle are acquiring them.

Because systems manufactured by different vendors cannot directly communicate with one another, technical and policy issues must be solved to permit fingerprint searches to be conducted across jurisdictional boundaries. The new technology may trigger a reexamination of State and local laws concerning the fingerprinting of juveniles and the use of these prints. Many State laws prohibit putting the fingerprints of juveniles in adult files.

Although they are quite expensive, the automated systems have also made it feasible to match the fingerprints of job applicants rapidly against prints of convicted offenders. Such checks are increasingly being required by State legislation for certain types of sensitive public and private occupations, especially those involving working with children.

Source: *Automated fingerprint identification systems: Technology and policy issues.*

Source notes

Single copies of any report with an NCJ number can be obtained free from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850, toll-free 800–732–3277 (local number 301–251–5500).

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87